The Śūraṅgama Sūtra

大佛頂首楞嚴經

Translated by

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The Śūraṅgama Sūtra

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Preface

The Śūraṅgama Sūtra at a Glance

I. Historical Background

The Śūraṅgama Sūtra was transmitted to China during the first year of the Shenlong era under Emperor Zhongzong of the Tang dynasty (705 CE). At that time, the Indian Dharma Master Pramiti defied the stringent restrictions imposed by India upon the exportation of the scripture. Concealing the text within his own arm, he secretly carried it across the seas to China. Upon arriving in Guangzhou, the sutra was translated into Chinese through the collaborative efforts of the eminent statesman Fang Rong, who served as amanuensis and literary editor, together with the Indian śramaṇa Meghaśikha. The scripture was thereafter formally rendered into Chinese in Guangzhou.

Within the history of Chinese Buddhism, the Śūraṅgama Sūtra occupies a position of immense spiritual and doctrinal significance, and has long been revered as "the Śūraṅgama of Awakening" (開悟的楞嚴), a scripture especially celebrated for its profound exposition of enlightenment and meditative realization.

The circumstances surrounding its transmission and

translation were extraordinarily arduous. At that time, India regarded the sutra as both a national treasure and an esoteric scripture not to be disseminated abroad. Dharma Master Pramiti reportedly attempted on several occasions to smuggle the text out of India, only to be intercepted by border authorities. In the end, he transcribed the scripture onto exceedingly thin white silk, cut open his own arm, concealed the manuscript within the wound, and allowed the flesh to heal before embarking by sea for China.

Upon reaching Guangzhou in the Shenlong era of the Tang dynasty, he received the full support of Chancellor Fang Rong. Renowned for his literary refinement and scholarly accomplishment, Fang Rong carefully polished and recorded the translation, thereby contributing to the formation of a scripture distinguished by both rigorous structure and exceptional prose style.

The historical and religious significance of the sutra was further magnified by later tradition. According to legend, the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (538-597 A.D.) of the Sui dynasty once heard that such a scripture existed in India. Longing to behold and recite it, he established a special platform of worship and was said to have bowed in reverence toward the West for eighteen years. Yet until the time of his parinirvāṇa, he never personally encountered the text, having only heard from an Indian monk description of its inconceivable profundity and excellence.

After the Śūraṅgama Sūtra entered China, it came to be

regarded as a supreme treasure for the protection of the nation and the preservation of the Dharma. Empress Wu Zetian of the Tang Dynasty (624-705 A.D.) reportedly preserved the scripture within the imperial palace and ordered its circulation throughout the empire. Thereafter, the sutra exerted a profound influence upon the subsequent development of the Chan, Tiantai, and Huayan traditions of Chinese Buddhism.

II. A General Introduction to Its Main Themes

To summarize the commentary on this sutra by one of the Four Distinguished Buddhist Masters in late Ming Dynasty—Master Ou-Yi (1599-1655 A.D., 藕益大師), the entire pedagogical vision of ***The Śūraṅgama Sūtra*** is grounded upon the three words "Great Buddha Crown/Head" (Da Fo Ding, 大佛頂). Put simply, the "Great Buddha Head" signifies the Principle of Suchness (tathatā). Thus, Master Ouyi states that the Śūraṅgama King Samādhi is, in essence, nothing other than "maintaining right mindfulness of True Suchness." When this principle of Suchness manifests inwardly, it is called the Buddha-nature; when manifested throughout all phenomena, it is called the Dharma-nature. This is the Principle of the Great Buddha Crown—the intrinsic virtue upon which our cultivation relies.

What, then, is the characteristic of the Great Buddha Crown? It is "the noumenal essence of the mind's own self-nature." The crucial point here lies in the term "self-nature"

(自性). In cultivating the Great Buddha Crown, one must first understand that this principle is fundamentally and primordially so. “Self-nature” means that all sentient beings are originally endowed with it. Cultivation is not a matter of adding something new afterwards; rather, it is a recovery of our original countenance, a restoration of what has always already been present.

The entire ten fascicles of the scripture revolve around two great contemplative movements. The first is “entering emptiness through provisional existence”: through “turning the light around and reflecting inwardly, while maintaining right mindfulness of True Suchness,” one returns delusive thought to the nature of mind itself. The second is “emerging from emptiness back into provisional existence”: relying upon the power of the Bodhi-vow, one extensively cultivates the Six Pāramitās and accumulates the two provisions of merit and wisdom.

Judging from the structural unfolding of the scripture, the doctrine of Suchness in the Śūraṅgama first requires one to illuminate the Suchness within one’s own mind—to first rectify and settle the mind itself. One must first discover within the mind the principle of “unchanging yet according with conditions, and according with conditions yet unchanging.” Only then does one proceed to engage in the external realm. Your psycho-physical world is “unchanging yet accordant with conditions; accordant with conditions yet unchanging.” Likewise, all external objects are also “unchanging yet accordant with conditions; accordant with

conditions yet unchanging." Thirdly, the scripture explains the relation between the Suchness within and the Suchness without: how the Suchness of one's own mind may be employed to activate and transform the Suchness inherent in the external world.

Hence, when the Śūraṅgama speaks of the Principle of Suchness, it addresses three themes: first, the Suchness of the inner mind; second, the Suchness of external phenomena; and third, the relationship between the Suchness of mind and the Suchness of the outer world. These three themes occupy fully three and a half fascicles of the scripture.

At the beginning of the scripture, the Buddha spends three and a half fascicles distinguishing true mind from deluded mind. At first, the Buddha does not analyze the afflictions in detail. He merely points out that all afflictions possess a single root, and that all merit and virtue likewise possess a root; thus, he speaks of "the two fundamental roots." The Buddha does not initially differentiate superficial branches or secondary functions. Rather, he simply teaches that all dharmas arise through causes and conditions. There are two such kinds of causal conditions. One is the conditioned nexus of defilement—the cycle of affliction, karma, and suffering: the obstacles of affliction, karmic obstruction, and retributive obstruction. The other is the conditioned nexus that gives rise to the Dharma-body, prajñā, liberation, and the immeasurable adornments of merit and virtue.

Why is it that some people activate the mind so as to create

immense merit, while others activate the mind so as to generate countless afflictions, karmic entanglements, and the continuity of saṃsāric birth and death? The Buddha explains that this difference arises from a fundamental error. These "two roots" are as follows: the permanently abiding true mind is the root of purity, whereas the grasping and discriminating mind (攀緣心) is the root of defilement. Thus, the two roots are: the eternally abiding true mind, and the mind that clings to conditioned objects.

The second major section is "turning away from delusion and returning to truth," which likewise occupies three and a half fascicles. The earlier section expounds principles and theory; "returning from delusion to truth" explains the actual method of cultivation. Before teaching the Twenty-Five Perfect Penetrations, the Buddha expounds the "Two Decisive Principles." That is, if one now wishes to extinguish delusive thought and gradually reveal the true mind, one must first generate two decisive understandings.

First, one must carefully examine the causal ground of one's initial aspiration. Why do you cultivate at all? Your vow-power directs and guides the mind; therefore, one must first examine whether one has genuinely aroused Bodhicitta. This is the aspiration on the causal ground.

Second, one must investigate the root of affliction. If one wishes to counteract affliction, where exactly is affliction located? The scripture explains that affliction is concealed within the gateways of the six sense faculties. In order for this

single thought-mind to contact external objects, it must pass through six gates: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These six gates cannot simply be shut off. One commits evil karma through the six faculties, but one also accomplishes merit and virtue through these very same faculties. The crucial point is whether one can cleanse the defilements of the six faculties. Once purified, the six faculties radiate luminosity.

Thus, the scripture first speaks of "the splendid house having a gate." The "splendid house" signifies Nirvāṇa. One must first locate the gate by which one enters the house—and that gate is precisely the six faculties. One must first eliminate affliction and arouse Bodhicitta; this constitutes the foundational preparation prior to entering the Path.

The next section concerns the "proper cultivation of samādhi." Within this there are two essential aspects: primary practice and auxiliary practice. First comes the primary practice. The principal cultivation of the Śūraṅgama King Samādhi is the Twenty-Five Perfect Penetrations.

"Once the Perfect Penetrations are set forth, one realizes that all expedient means are none other than the sacred nature itself." The Buddha first explains that all twenty-five methods may serve as gateways for turning delusion back into truth, each capable of bringing the mind home to its original source. What are these twenty-five methods? They include the six faculties, the six sense-objects, and the six consciousnesses—thus the eighteen realms altogether—as well as the seven

elements: earth, water, fire, wind, space, faculties, and consciousness. In truth, the entire teaching of the Twenty-Five Perfect Penetrations reveals that every aspect of one's body and mind may become a vehicle for returning the mind home; each is an expedient gateway for awakening to the nature of the Great Buddha Crown.

"Once the perfect faculty is selected, one knows that the faculty of hearing is uniquely suited to beings of this world." After explaining the twenty-five methods, the Buddha states that one should not attempt to cultivate all of them simultaneously. Rather, one must choose the "perfect faculty" most suited to one's capacities—especially the faculty most fitting for beings in the Sahā world. Thus, among the twenty-five gateways, the Perfect Penetration of the Ear Faculty is selected as especially suitable for us. According to the commentaries of the ancient masters, two chapters are particularly crucial: the chapter on Avalokiteśvara's Perfect Penetration through the Ear Faculty, and the chapter on Buddha-Recitation Perfect Penetration.

Why is the ear faculty especially powerful? First, its function is comprehensive and omnidirectional. The eyes see only within a limited angle; what lies behind cannot be seen. Hearing, however, functions in all directions. Even if someone calls from behind, one hears distinctly. Hence its function is especially vast. Second, its operation is remarkably enduring. One may gaze at a Buddha-image for an hour and grow weary, but one may listen to sound for an entire day without fatigue. The ear faculty may be

continuously employed without exhaustion. Therefore, among the twenty-five methods, the ear faculty is singled out because its functioning is both expansive and enduring.

Yet the Perfect Penetration of the Ear Faculty does not merely involve hearing sounds. One must proceed further and "turn the light around to illuminate within." Ordinarily, when we hear sounds, we immediately generate sensations and then drift along with those sounds. Our habitual tendency is outward grasping, because sensory feeling stimulates the grasping mind. Here, however, the process is reversed: "turn hearing back to hear the self-nature." How is it that you hear sounds? Why are you able to hear? Who is it that hears? Who, precisely, is listening?

At this point one begins inward contemplation—contemplating that very mind itself. Then one continues to contemplate ever more deeply. Finally—suddenly! —there is the realization: "Originally pure and fundamentally pervading the Dharma-realm." One discovers the hearing-nature itself. The Buddha-nature manifested through the eyes is called the seeing-nature; manifested through the ears, it is called the hearing-nature. Seeing, hearing, awareness, and cognition all possess their own intrinsic nature. One may return home through any of these gateways, for every gateway ultimately leads back to the same home. Thus, the object contemplated in Ear-Faculty Perfect Penetration is one's own pure intrinsic nature, discovered precisely through hearing sound and then reflecting inwardly.

The chapter on Buddha-Recitation Perfect Penetration proceeds somewhat differently. Its contemplative object is the Buddha's Name itself. Through direct recollection and mindfulness of the Buddha-name, one enters into sympathetic resonance and spiritual communion and thereby awakens to one's intrinsic nature.

The third major section concerns "the stages of cultivation." Spiritual practice naturally unfolds through progressive stages. "Though there is no gradation in itself, gradations are provisionally established; thus, the primary and auxiliary practices unfold in perfect mutual illumination."

Within cultivation there is the mind which traverses the stages—the mindful mind itself. From the standpoint of its unchanging essence, this mind possesses no gradation whatsoever. The pure Dharma-body of Suchness knows no before or after, no superiority or inferiority. In its essential nature, there are no stages. Yet from the standpoint of function and manifestation in accordance with conditions, stages are provisionally established.

This means that although all practitioners are "bringing the mind home," each person's realization of that home is at once the same and yet different. How so? Consider the moon on the first day of the lunar month and the full moon on the fifteenth day. Their luminosity is fundamentally identical, yet the degree of manifestation differs. Thus, although everyone's contemplative object is the same pure intrinsic nature—the same "home"—the extent of realization nevertheless differs.

Therefore, within what is ultimately without gradation, provisional gradations are established.

At this stage one practices "the perfect integration of primary and auxiliary cultivation." The primary practice is maintaining right mindfulness of True Suchness; the auxiliary practices are upholding the precepts and reciting mantras.

The Śūraṅgama Sūtra expounds fifty-five stages of cultivation, all intended to evaluate one's actual progress in practice. When your mind encounters circumstances, if you continually act according to "what I feel like doing," then you remain trapped within sensation and emotional reactivity; in that case, you are not truly cultivating the Śūraṅgama King Samādhi at all. Within the framework of true cultivation, one must constantly remind oneself: "What ought I to do? What must I do?" The stronger and more frequent this orientation becomes, the more one advances toward success. In this way, deluded thought is gradually transformed into true mind.

The Śūraṅgama does not dwell excessively upon secondary details; rather, it points directly to the root. The suffering of birth and death and the obstructions of affliction both possess a root: delusive thinking, namely the tendency to follow one's feelings and sensations. Likewise, all the virtues of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas possess a root: following principle rather than impulse; following the truth of "unchanging yet according with conditions, and according with conditions yet unchanging"; following the nature of the Great Buddha Crown itself.

After the Śūraṅgama King Samādhi has been fully expounded, the Buddha then speaks further on the importance of karmic causality, instructing us to uphold the precepts; and He further expounds the various demonic states and deviations, instructing us to maintain right view. Thus, by means of the two gates of precepts and doctrinal understanding, the Buddha safeguards the Śūraṅgama King Samādhi. Such is the overall structure of the Śūraṅgama Sūtra.

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I

Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was residing in the Jīvaka's monastery at Śrāvastī, accompanied by a great assembly of 1,250 monks, all of whom were arahants without defilements. Among the Buddha's disciples were those who excelled in transcending all kinds of karmas and maintaining proper conduct in the land, capable of fulfilling the Buddha's instructions on the turning of the wheel of Dharma, upholding pure Vinaya, and propagating its standards throughout the three realms. They manifested countless incarnations to liberate beings and to rescue future generations from the burdens of worldly dust. Their names included the great wisdom Śāriputra, Mahā Moggallāna, Mahā Koṭṭhita, Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, Subhūti, Upanisa, and others, who held the highest positions among them. Additionally, countless Pratyekabuddhas and beginners had come to the Buddha, observing the monks at leisure during the summer retreat, while bodhisattvas from the ten directions sought guidance, respectfully desiring instruction in profound meanings. Immediately, the Tathāgata arranged seats and prepared a serene assembly, teaching the assembly profound Dharma that had never been heard. The celestial sounds of the Kālaṅka flute resonated throughout the ten directions. Bodhisattvas as numerous as sands gathered in the assembly, led by Mañjuśrī. At that time, King Prasenajit, on the anniversary day of mourning for his deceased father, personally invited the Buddha to the palace and offered a vegetarian feast of the finest delicacies of unparalleled taste, also extending

invitations to great bodhisattvas. Likewise, the wealthy lay patrons of the city, having prepared food for the Sangha, awaited the Buddha's arrival. The Buddha commanded Mañjuśrī to organize the bodhisattvas and arahants to attend those hosts' feasts, but only Ananda alone received a special invitation earlier and had not yet returned for the assigning of the Sangha. While traveling afar without the senior monks or preceptors as his companions, Ananda took up the duty alone, proceeding through the city in order with the alms bowl, intending first to serve the initial donors and lastly the chief patron, showing impartial compassion to all, without regard for their castes, be they Ksatriyas of honorable caste or Candalas of the lower caste. In this, Ananda aspired to perfect boundless merits for all beings because he was fully aware that the Buddha, had admonished that Śāriputra and Mahā Kāśyapa, as arahants, did not maintain unprejudiced mentality for their almsrounds. Revering the Buddha's instruction that is free from all doubt and slander, Ananda proceeded slowly through the city gates with solemn demeanor, and maintained the decorum of the alms collection.

At that time, while on his almsrounds, Ananda passed a house of lust and encountered a woman of great illusionary powers, a young Matanga enchantress who was able to manipulate Brahma Heaven incantations when she attempted to lure him onto her bed, threatening to ruin his will to precepts through her lascivious caressing. The Tathāgata, knowing of these sorceries, soon returned to the monastery after completing the meal. The king, ministers, and wealthy lay patrons accompanied the Buddha, wishing to hear the

Dharma. Then, the World-Honored One radiated a hundred-jeweled, invincible light from his head. From this light emerged a thousand-petaled jeweled lotus, on which a Buddha manifestation sat cross-legged, expounding sacred mantras. The Buddha commanded Mañjuśrī to protect and neutralize the malevolent spells. Then Ananda, together with the enchantress, returned to the Buddha. Seeing the Buddha, Ananda prostrated with grief, lamenting that despite his extensive learning, he had not fully attained the power of the path. He earnestly requested instruction from the Tathāgatas of the ten directions to attain Bodhi and the initial methods of marvelous śamatha and samādhi. At that time, countless bodhisattvas as numerous as sands, along with great arahants and Pratyekabuddhas from the ten directions, all wished to hear the teaching, sitting quietly to receive the Buddha's sacred command.

The Buddha said to Ananda: "You and I belong to the same clan and generation in our family lineage. When you first set your mind upon the Dharma I conferred, what superior features did you perceive, causing you to abandon the profound attachments of the world?" Ananda replied, "World-Honored One, I perceived the Tathāgata's thirty-two marks, supremely excellent and unsurpassably beautiful, the body radiating like lapis lazuli. I constantly reflected that this form did not arise from sensual desire, because lustful energies, being coarse, impure, and mixed with blood and filth, cannot generate such supreme, pure, and wondrous golden-violet light. Therefore, I longed to shave my head (join the Sangha) and follow the Buddha." The Buddha said, "Well said,

Ananda. You should know that all beings, from beginningless time, had been subject to the endless cycles of birth and death because they do not recognize the ever-present, pure, luminous nature of the mind. They employ deluded thoughts; since these thoughts are not true, they experience samsara. Now, if you wish to investigate supreme Bodhi and truly manifest your nature, you must respond with a straightforward mind to my questions. All Tathāgatas throughout the ten directions follow the same path: liberation from the cycles of birth and death depends on a straightforward mind. 'Straight' in this sense extends through all stages, from beginning to end, with no crookedness or deviation. Now, Ananda, I ask you: when you were motivated by the thirty-two marks of the Tathāgata to practice spiritual cultivation, who is the observer that perceives, and who is the agent that takes delight in the Tathāgata's wondrous thirty-two marks?

Ananda said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, the affection and delight I felt arose from my eyes and mind. By observing the Tathāgata's supreme marks with my eyes, my mind generated affection and delight, prompting me to set forth the aspiration to abandon birth and death." The Buddha said to Ananda, "As you say, the true object of delight depends on the mind and eyes. If one does not recognize where the mind and eyes are located, one cannot subdue the burdens of defilement. Just as a king, when his kingdom is invaded by bandits, must send out troops who know where the bandits are in order to defeat them, so too must your mind and eyes recognize their proper position; otherwise, your wandering perception will lead to delusion. Now I ask you:

where are the mind and eyes located?"

Ananda said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, all sentient beings of the ten categories have consciousness and mind located within their bodies. Even when I observe the Tathāgata's blue-lotus eyes, they appear upon the Buddha's face. Yet I perceive that the four floating elements of my eyes remain before me. Thus, consciousness and mind truly reside within the body."

The Buddha said to Ananda: "Now you are sitting in the Tathāgata's lecture hall. Where is Jetavana now?" Ananda replied: "World-Honored One, this grand, multi-storied, pure lecture hall is at the Jīvaka's mango grove. Yet the Jetavana grove is actually outside the hall. Sitting within the hall, I first see the Buddha and then the assembly. When I look outward, I perceive the grove. Why do I see the grove?" The Buddha said: "Because the windows and doors of this great hall are open, you are able to see far into the grove while seated within."

At that time, the World-Honored One, among the assembly, stretched his golden-colored arm and touched Ananda's head. He said to Ananda and the gathered audience: "There is a Samādhi known as the 'Great Buddha's Head Supreme King Samādhi,' perfect with ten thousand virtues, a transcending path of liberation with the inconceivable adornments of the Tathāgatas of the ten directions. Now, listen attentively." Ananda prostrated and respectfully accepted the compassionate instruction.

The Buddha said to Ananda: “As you say, you sit in the hall with doors and windows open, seeing far into the grove. Yet there are beings within this hall who do not see the Buddha but only perceive outside. Ananda replied, “it’s impossible for anyone to be able to see the outside grove without seeing the Buddha first.” “Ananda, you are the same; your mind is fully clear. If the mind by which you perceive now truly resides within the body, then you should be able to perceive the inside of your body? Are there beings that see the inside of their bodies first, before they can observe things outside? Seeing the inside, even if one cannot perceive the heart, liver, spleen, or stomach, or the growth of nails and hair, or the movement of sinews and blood vessels, one still clearly knows. How could one fail to know what is inside yet know what is outside? Therefore, it should be known that the mind that perceives and knows does not reside inside the body. Ananda bowed and said: “I have heard the Tathāgata’s Dharma; I realize that my mind truly resides outside the body. Why is this so? It is like a lamp: when placed inside a room, it illuminates the room first. But if placed outside, the beings inside only see outside, not within. Thus, the lamp outside cannot illuminate the room. This teaching is clear; there is no delusion. By this, one attains comprehension with the Buddha, free from error.”

The Buddha said to Ananda: “Monks have come from Sravasti and, while collecting alms, are returning to Prince Jetri’s Grove. I have already eaten my meal. When you observe one monk eating, do the others become full?” Ananda replied, “No, World-Honored One. Why? These

monks, though Arhats, have different physical bodies. How could one person's eating make the rest full?" The Buddha said: "If you realize that the mind which perceives and knows truly resides outside the body, then body and mind, being external to one another, do not affect each other. What the mind perceives, the body cannot perceive; what the body perceives, the mind cannot know. Now I show you my hand that is as soft as cotton: when you see it, does your mind discriminate?" Ananda replied: "Yes, World-Honored One." The Buddha said: "If the mind discriminates, how can it be outside? Therefore, you should know that your statement that the perceiving and knowing mind does not reside outside the body does not make any sense."

Ananda said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, as you said, since the mind does not see the inner, it does not reside within the body. Yet body and mind, knowing each other, are inseparable, so the mind cannot be outside either. I now contemplate that the mind resides

in a single place." The Buddha asked: "Where is this place?" Ananda replied: "If the mind which perceives and knows does not perceive what is inside while being able to see outside, then in my contemplation, it may reside within the eye-faculty, like a person placing a crystal bowl over his eyes. Though the object is placed over the eyes, it does not obstruct vision. The eye-faculty discriminates according to what is seen. Likewise, my mind, which perceives and knows, does not see inside because it resides within the eye-faculty; it can clearly apprehend the outside without obstruction because it

is concealed within the eye-faculty."

The Buddha said to Ananda: "As you said, the mind is hidden in the eye-faculty, just like the eyes being hidden inside crystals. If a person covers his eyes with crystals, can he see the mountains and rivers as well as the crystal itself?" "Yes, as you said, World-Honored One. The person sees the crystal when covering his eyes with the crystals." The Buddha told Ananda: "Similarly, if your mind can be compared to someone's eyes with crystals covered over them, then you can perceive the world, but why don't you see your own eyes? If you could see your own eyes, your eyes would be part of your external surroundings. But then your mind and eyes could not work together to make distinctions. If you cannot see your eyes, why did you say that the perceiving mind is concealed within the eye-faculty just like being covered by the crystals. Therefore, you should realize that it is nonsense for you to say that the perceiving mind is hidden inside the eye-faculty just like being covered by crystals.

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World–Honored One, I have been thinking about this further. In the body of a sentient being, the internal organs are enclosed within, while the bodily openings are directed outward. What is enclosed within is dark; what opens outward is bright. Thus, when I stand before the Buddha with my eyes open and see light, that is seeing outward. When I close my eyes and perceive darkness, that should be seeing inward—that is, seeing the dark interior within the body. How does this idea sound?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "When you close your eyes and see darkness, is that dark appearance actually facing your eyes, or not? If it is facing your eyes, then it is right before them—how can that count as being inside the body? And if you insist that this counts as being inside, then when you sit in a dark room with no sun, moon, or lamp, all the darkness in that room would also have to be your own internal organs. But if that darkness is not facing your eyes at all, then how can it be called a vision?

"If you want to argue that, instead of seeing outward, the act of seeing can turn inward—so that closing the eyes and seeing darkness means seeing within the body—then why, when you open your eyes and see light, do you not see your own face? If you cannot see your own face, then this idea of inward seeing cannot stand. If you say that you can see your face, then the mind that knows and the eye faculty would have to be out in empty space; how could they still be inside your body?

"And if they were out in empty space, then they would no longer truly be part of you. In that case, when the Tathagata now sees your face, your body would have to share the same body as the Tathagata. Thus, when your eyes perceive something, your own body would be unaware of it. If, on the other hand, you insist that your body and eyes each have a separate perception, then one body would contain two separate perceptions so that you, being one person, would eventually become two Buddhas. Therefore, the idea of seeing darkness as seeing inside is mistaken and impossible."

Ananda then said, “I have often heard the Buddha teach the fourfold monastic and lay assemblies that because some mental activity arises, all kinds of dharmas arise; and because dharmas arise, all kinds of mental activities arise. Reflecting on this, I now take this very faculty of thinking and discriminating to be my true mind. Wherever it comes into contact with an object, there the mind is present. Therefore, it is not fixed as being inside, outside, or in-between.”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You now say that because dharmas arise, all kinds of mind arise, and that the mind exists wherever it comes into contact with something. But if this mind has no substance of its own, then there is nothing that can come into contact with anything. If that which has no substance can nevertheless make contact, then there would have to be a nineteenth realm produced by conjunction with a seventh dust—and this cannot be so.

“But if it does have a substance, then let us consider this: suppose you use your hand to pinch your own body. The mind by which you know this sensation - does it come out from within, or does it enter from without? If it comes out from within, then it should also be able to see what is inside your body. If it comes from without, then it should first see your face.”

Ananda said, “Seeing belongs to the eye; knowing belongs to the mind. To say that the mind sees would not be right.”

The Buddha said, “If the eye could itself see, then when

you are in a room, could the door also see? And if the eye truly sees, then after a person has died, though the eyes still remain, they should still be able to see things. If they could still see things, why would that person be called dead?

"And again, Ananda, if the mind of awareness and knowing must truly have a substance, is it one substance or many? Is it spread throughout the body, or is it not spread throughout the body? If it is one substance, then when you pinch one limb with your hand, all four limbs should feel it. If all do feel it, then the pinch would have no fixed place. But if the pinch does have a fixed place, then your theory of one substance cannot stand.

"If it is many substances, then you would become many persons. Which one of those would be you?

"Ananda, if your awareness spreads throughout the whole body, then the same problem as before remains. But if it does not spread throughout the body, then when you touch your head, your foot should not know it. Yet this is not so.

"Therefore, when the head feels something and the feet should not know it, that is not what actually happens. So your claim that the mind has a fixed bodily substance cannot be established."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, I also once heard the Buddha, together with Manjushri and the other Dharma Princes, speak on the ultimate reality of things and

say that the mind is neither within nor without. As I reflect on it, since what is within cannot see, and what is without cannot know, the mind cannot be within. Since body and mind know one another, it cannot be outside. Now, because they know one another, yet there is no seeing within, it should therefore be in between."

The Buddha said, "You speak of a middle. But the middle cannot be vague and without location. Now that you infer a middle, where is this middle? Is it in some place, or is it within the body?

"If it is within the body, then if it is at the edge, it is not the middle; and if it is in the center, it is the same as being inside. But if it is in some place, then is there something by which it is marked out, or is there nothing by which it is marked out? If there is no mark, then it is the same as nothing, and there is no fixed place. Why? Suppose a man sets up a marker to indicate what he calls the middle. One who looks from the east would say it lies to the west; one who looks from the south would say it lies to the north. Once the marker itself is confused, the mind's notion of the middle must also be chaotic."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "What I mean by the middle is not either of those two. As the World-Honored One has said, from eye and form as conditions there arises eye-consciousness. The eye has discrimination, while the form-dust is without knowing. Since consciousness arises between them, that is where the mind is."

The Buddha said, “If your mind is in between the sense faculty and the sense-object, then does this mind-substance partake of both, or does it partake of neither? If it partakes of both, then the nature of things becomes confused. The object is not aware, while the faculty has knowing; the two stand opposed—how could that be called the middle?

“If it partakes of neither, then it is neither knowing nor unknowing, and so it has no real substance. If it has no substance, then what appearance could the middle possibly have? Therefore, you should know that to say it is in between is also impossible.”

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, in the past I saw the Buddha, together with Mahamaudgalyayana, Subhuti, Purna, and Sariputra, turning the Wheel of Dharma. They often said that the nature of awareness and discrimination is neither within, nor without, nor in the middle, but is altogether without any fixed place. They also said that to be unattached to all things is called the mind. If so, then may I say that my own non-attachment is what is called the mind?”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You say that the nature of awareness and discrimination is altogether without location. In the world, empty space, water, land, creatures that fly, and all visible things are all included within ‘everything.’ Now, is your non-attachment among these present, or is it absent?

“If it is absent, then it is no different from the hair of a

tortoise or the horn of a rabbit. How then can it be called non-attachment? But if there is such a thing as non-attachment, then it cannot be called absent. If there is no mark, then it is absent. If it is not absent, then it has a mark. Where there is a mark, there is presence. How then can it be called unattached?

"Therefore you should know that to call awareness and discrimination 'the mind' because it is unattached to all things is impossible."

At that time, in the midst of the great assembly, Ananda rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, placed his right knee upon the ground, joined his palms in reverence, and said to the Buddha:

"I am the Tathagata's youngest kinsman. Though I have now left home and joined the Sangha, I have still relied upon the Buddha's compassion and affection. And so, though I have heard much, I have not attained freedom from the outflows. I was unable to resist the Kapila spell, and for that reason I was turned by it and sank into the house of lust.

"This must be because I did not know where the true boundary ultimately lies. I only pray that the World-Honored One, in great compassion and pity, will reveal to us the path of shamatha, so that even the heretics such as icchantikas may be rid of their false views and thus converted to truth."

Having spoken thus, he prostrated himself with his whole body upon the ground. And the whole assembly, thirsting

and longing to hear the teaching, waited for the Buddha's compassionate instruction.

At that time, the World-Honored One emitted various rays of light from the gateway of his face. That light shone with a brilliance like hundreds of thousands of suns. Throughout all Buddha-worlds there arose the six kinds of trembling. Then, in a single instant, all lands throughout the ten directions, as numerous as motes of dust, were all revealed. By the Buddha's awesome spiritual power, all those worlds were gathered into one world. And within that one world, all the great Bodhisattvas remained in their own lands, standing with palms joined, reverently listening.

The Buddha said to Ananda, "All living beings, from beginningless time, have fallen into all kinds of inversion and confusion. The seeds of their karma arise naturally in clusters, like the fruit of the aksha tree. Therefore, practitioners are unable to attain unsurpassed Bodhi. Some go no further than becoming Sravakas or Pratyekabuddhas. Others become followers of outside paths, heavenly demons, demon kings, or the retinues of demons. All this is because they do not know the two fundamental roots, and so they cultivate in a mistaken and confused way. It is like trying to cook sand into a fine meal–even through dust–like kalpas, it can never be done.

"What are these two roots?

"Ananda, the first is the beginningless root of birth and death. It is the grasping, outward–turning mind which you and all

beings now take to be your own true nature.

“The second is the beginningless, pure ground of Bodhi and Nirvana. It is the original luminosity of your conscious essence, able to give rise to all conditions, yet missed by those very conditions it gives rise to. Because all beings have lost this fundamental brightness, they go on acting within it all day long without ever awakening to it, and so they drift in vain into the various destinies.”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “If you now wish to know the path of shamatha and seek liberation from birth and death, then I will ask you once more.”

At that moment, the Tathagata raised his golden arm and curled his five fingers into a fist. He said to Ananda, “Do you see this now?”

Ananda replied, “Yes, I do.”

The Buddha said, “What do you see?”

Ananda replied, “I see the Tathagata raise his arm and curl his fingers into a radiant fist, which shines before my mind and eyes.”

The Buddha said, “With what do you see?”

Ananda replied, “I and the whole assembly see it with our eyes.”

The Buddha said to Ananda, "Now answer me this: when the Tathagata bends his fingers into a radiant fist and shines it before your mind and eyes, your eyes are able to see it. But what do you take to be the mind that responds when my fist shines before you?"

Ananda replied, "The Tathagata is now asking where the mind is located. As for me, I take that which inwardly examines, searches, and follows after things to be my mind."

The Buddha said, "No, Ananda, this is not your mind."

Startled, Ananda withdrew from his seat, stood up, joined his palms, and said to the Buddha, "If this is not my mind, then what should it be called?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "This is merely the false and illusory mental image of the objects before you. It confuses your true nature. From beginningless time down to this very life, you have mistaken a thief for your own son. Thus you have lost your original, constant nature, and so you undergo the round of rebirth."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World–Honored One, I am the Buddha's beloved younger kinsman. It was because my heart cherished the Buddha that I left home. And this heart of mine has not served only the Tathagata. Even were I to travel throughout lands as countless as the sands of the Ganges, attending upon all Buddhas and good spiritual teachers, bringing forth great courage, and carrying out every difficult

practice, it would all be done with this very heart. Even if I were to slander the Dharma and forever lose my good roots, that too would be because of this very heart.

"If what the Buddha has now pointed out is not the mind, then I would be without a mind, no different from earth and wood. Apart from this awareness and knowing, I have nothing else. How then can the Tathagata say that this is not the mind? I am truly frightened, and this whole assembly is without exception filled with doubt. I only pray that the Buddha, out of great compassion, will instruct those of us who have not yet awakened to this."

At that time, seated upon the lion–throne, the World–Honored One instructed Ananda and the whole assembly, wishing to lead their minds into the forbearance of non-arising dharmas when He touched Ananda's head and said to him:

"The Tathagata has always taught that all dharmas that arise are only manifestations of mind. All causes and effects, all worlds, and even the finest motes of dust take mind as their substance.

"Ananda, if all things in all the worlds, down even to grass, leaves, threads, and knots, when traced to their source, each possess a nature of their own, and if even empty space has its name and appearance, then how much more should the pure, wondrous, luminous mind–which is the nature of all minds–not be without a substance of its own?

"If you insist that the knowing nature which engages in discrimination and reflective thought is the mind, then that mind should be able to exist apart from all forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and all the various activities of the sense–objects, and possess a complete nature of its own.

"As in your present case, when you hear me preaching the Dharma, your discrimination arises because of sound. Even if all seeing, hearing, sensation, and knowing were cut off, and inwardly you maintained a state of quiet stillness, that too would still be nothing more than a discriminating shadow of dharma–dust.

"I am not telling you simply to hold that this is not mind. But you must examine the matter with subtle care: if, apart from the objects before you, there remains a discriminating nature, then that is truly your mind. But if this discriminating nature has no substance apart from the dust–objects, then it is merely a discriminating shadow of those objects.

"The dust–objects are not permanent. When they change and perish, this mind would then be like the hair of a tortoise or the horn of a rabbit. Then your Dharma–body would also come to an end. And who then could cultivate and realize the forbearance of non-arising dharmas ?"

At once Ananda and the whole assembly fell silent and were at a loss.

The Buddha said to Ananda, "All those in the world who

cultivate and study, though they may presently attain the nine successive samadhis, cannot exhaust the outflows and become Arhats. All this is because they cling to this false thought of birth and death, mistaking it for what is real. Therefore, although you are much learned, you have not attained the holy fruit."

Hearing this, Ananda again wept in sorrow. Prostrating himself with his whole body, he knelt long, joined his palms, and said to the Buddha:

"From the time I followed the Buddha and brought forth the resolve to leave home to join the Sangha, I have relied upon the Buddha's mighty power. I always thought within myself that I need not labor in cultivation, supposing that the Tathagata would bestow samadhi upon me. I did not know that body and mind cannot take each other's place. Thus I lost my original mind. Though my body has left home, my mind has not entered the Way. I am like a poor son who leaves his father and wanders away.

"Today I now know that, though one may have much learning, if one does not cultivate, it is no different from not hearing at all. It is like a man speaking of food—in the end he can never be filled. World–Honored One, we are now bound by the two obstacles, and this is because we do not know the quiescent and ever–abiding nature of mind. I only pray that the Tathagata, out of compassion for our poverty and exposure, will bring forth the wondrous luminous mind and open the vision of the Way for us."

At once the Tathagata emitted a precious light from the svastika mark upon his chest. That light shone brilliantly in hundreds of thousands of colors. In a single instant it pervaded all Buddha–worlds as numerous as motes of dust in the ten directions, and poured over the crowns of all the Tathagatas in every jeweled land of the ten directions. Then it returned and came to Ananda and the whole assembly.

The Buddha said to Ananda, "I now raise for you the great banner of the Dharma, and also cause all beings in the ten directions to gain the wondrous, subtle, hidden, pure, luminous mind and to attain the pure eye.

"Ananda, you answered me before that you saw the radiant fist. Tell me: from what does the light of this fist arise? How does it become a fist? And with what do you see it?"

Ananda replied, "Because the Buddha's whole body is Jambunada gold, shining like a precious mountain, therefore there is light. And because I actually behold the tips of the five wheel–like fingers as they are bent and clenched to be shown to others, therefore there is the appearance of a fist."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "Today the Tathagata tells you plainly: even the wise must rely on analogy in order to awaken.

"Ananda, take my fist as an example. If I had no hand, there would be no fist. If you had no eyes, there would be no seeing. If your eye–faculty is compared to my fist, is the

meaning the same, or not?"

Ananda said, "Yes, World–Honored One. If I had no eyes, there would be no seeing. Therefore, to compare my eye–faculty to the Tathagata's fist—in matter and in meaning—it is indeed alike."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "What you call a similar case is not so. Why? If a man has no hand, then the fist is altogether gone. But in the case of one without eyes, it is not that seeing is entirely absent.

"Why is this so? Go and ask a blind man on the road, 'What do you see?' He will surely answer, 'Before my eyes there is only black darkness; I see nothing else.'

"From this it may be known that it is only the object before him that is dark. What loss is there to the seeing itself?"

Ananda said, "When blind men see only darkness before their eyes, how can that be called seeing?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "When blind men, having no eyes, see only darkness, and when a man with eyes sits in a dark room and sees only darkness, is there any difference between those two darknesses, or is there no difference?"

"So it is, World–Honored One. The darkness seen by the man in the dark room and the darkness seen by the blind are, when compared, no different at all."

“Ananda, if a blind man, who has seen only darkness before him, should suddenly regain his eyesight and then see all kinds of forms before him, you would call that seeing by the eye. But if a man in a dark room, who has seen only darkness before him, should suddenly obtain a lamp and then also see all kinds of forms before him, should that be called seeing by the lamp? If it were seeing by the lamp, then the lamp would itself possess seeing and would no longer be called a lamp. And if it were the lamp that sees, what would that have to do with you?

“Therefore, you should know: the lamp can reveal forms. In the same way, the eye can reveal forms. But the seeing–nature itself is the mind, not the eye.”

Although Ananda had heard these words, he and the whole assembly fell silent. Yet in their hearts they had not yet opened to full understanding. Still they hoped that the Tathagata’s compassionate voice would explain further. So, with joined palms and minds made pure, they waited for the Buddha’s merciful instruction.

At that time, the World–Honored One opened his radiant hand, marked with the net–pattern and soft as Tula cotton, and spread out the five wheel–like fingers. Instructing Ananda and the whole assembly, he said:

“When I first realized the Way, in the Deer Park, I said to Ajnata Kaundinya, the five bhiksus, and the fourfold assembly: ‘All living beings fail to accomplish Bodhi and fail

to become Arhats because they are misled by the contingent afflictions like guest and dust. At that time, by what did you awaken, so that now you have attained the holy fruit?’”

Then Kaundinya rose and said to the Buddha, “I am now an elder in the great assembly, and among them I alone received the name ‘the one who understands,’ because by awakening to the two words ‘guest’ and ‘dust’ I attained the fruit.

“World–Honored One, it is like a traveler who lodges for a while at an inn. He may stay the night, or he may take a meal. But once his lodging or meal is finished, he packs his belongings and goes on his way, for he cannot remain there at rest. If he were truly the host, he would have nowhere to go. Reflecting in this way, I understood that what does not remain is called the guest, while what remains is called the host. It is by not remaining that it is called the guest.

“Again, it is like after a fresh clearing of the sky, when the bright sun rises and its light enters through a crack, revealing all the motes of dust in empty space. The dust itself moves and shakes, while empty space remains still and unmoving. Reflecting in this way, I understood that what is clear and still is called space, and what shakes and moves is called dust. It is by moving that it is called dust.”

The Buddha said, “Just so.”

At once, in the midst of the great assembly, the Tathagata bent his five wheel–like fingers. Having bent them, he opened

them again; having opened them, he bent them once more. He said to Ananda, "What do you now see?"

Ananda said, "I see the Tathagata's jeweled hand opening and closing in the midst of the assembly."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "When you see my hand opening and closing in the midst of the assembly, is it my hand that opens and closes, or is it your seeing that opens and closes?"

Ananda said, "World–Honored One, it is the Buddha's jeweled hand that opens and closes in the midst of the assembly. I see the Tathagata's hand itself opening and closing. It is not my seeing–nature that opens and closes."

The Buddha said, "Who is moving, and who is still?"

Ananda said, "The Buddha's hand does not remain still, but as for my seeing–nature, there is not even any stillness there– how then could there be anything called movement?"

The Buddha said, "Just so."

Then the Tathagata, from the palm of his hand, sent forth a precious light to Ananda's right. At once Ananda turned his head and looked to the right. Again the Buddha sent forth a light to Ananda's left, and Ananda then turned his head and looked to the left.

The Buddha said to Ananda, "Why did your head move just

now?"

Ananda replied, "I saw the Tathagata send forth a wondrous precious light to my right and left. Therefore I looked to the right and left, and my head moved of itself."

The Buddha said, "Ananda, as you looked toward the Buddha's light, why did your head move? Was it your head that moved, or was it your seeing that moved?"

Ananda replied, "World–Honored One, my head moved of itself. But my seeing–nature has not even a trace of stillness—what, then, was moving?"

The Buddha said, "Just so."

Then the Tathagata addressed the whole assembly, saying:

"If living beings take what moves to be dust, and what does not remain to be the guest, then look at Ananda: his head itself moved, yet the seeing did not move. And look again at me: my hand itself opened and closed, yet the seeing showed no opening or closing.

"Why then do you now take what moves to be the body, and what moves to be the world before you? From beginning to end, thought after thought arises and perishes. Thus you lose your true nature and act in inversion. The true mind loses its truth, and you take things to be yourself. Revolving in this, you bring upon yourselves the flow of birth and death."

“How is it that you now take what moves to be your body, and what moves to be the world before you? From beginning to end, thought after thought arises and perishes. You abandon your true nature and act in inversion. The true mind loses its truth, and you take things to be yourself. Turning again and again within this, you bring the cycle of birth and death upon yourselves.”

II

At that time, Ananda and the whole assembly, having heard the Buddha's instruction, became peaceful in body and mind. They reflected that, from beginningless time, they had lost their original mind and had wrongly taken the shadowy workings of discrimination based on external objects to be real. Now they were awakened, like an infant who has lost its mother's milk and suddenly meets a compassionate mother.

With palms joined, they bowed to the Buddha and prayed to hear the Tathagata clearly reveal, within body and mind, the true and the false, the empty and the real, and the two illuminating natures of what is presently subject to birth and death and what is not subject to birth and death.

Then King Prasenajit rose and said to the Buddha, "World–Honored One, before I had received the instruction of the Buddhas, I encountered Katyayana and Vairatiputra, who all taught that when this body dies, it is cut off and extinguished, and that this is called nirvana. Although I have now encountered the Buddha, I still remain in doubt. How is this to be made clear, so that I may truly know that this mind abides in a state beyond birth and death? And may all in this assembly who still have outflows likewise be delighted to hear this."

The Buddha said to the king, "Your body is still present now, and I ask you this: is this fleshly body of yours like vajra,

abiding forever and never decaying, or will it in time perish?"

The king replied, "World–Honored One, this body of mine will in the end pass into destruction."

The Buddha said, "Great King, you have not yet perished–how then do you know that you will perish?"

The king replied, "World–Honored One, although this impermanent and decaying body of mine has not yet perished, I observe it here before me: thought after thought it changes and passes away; moment after moment it does not remain new. Like fire turning into ashes, it gradually wastes away and never ceases declining. Therefore I know for certain that this body will one day come to an end."

The Buddha said, "So it is, Great King. Your years have now passed into old age. How does your appearance compare with what it was when you were a child?"

The king replied, "World–Honored One, when I was an infant and a young boy, my skin was moist and full. As I grew to maturity, my blood and vital force were abundant. But now, in my declining years, old age presses in upon me. My form is withered and wasted, my spirit dim and clouded, my hair is white and my face is wrinkled. I am not far from the end. How could I be compared with the fullness and vigor of my prime?"

The Buddha said, "Great King, your appearance should not

have decayed all at once."

The king replied, "World–Honored One, this change has been happening in secret, and I truly did not perceive it. Cold and heat passed, and so, little by little, I came to this state. Why is this so? When I was twenty, though still called young, my appearance had already grown old compared with when I was ten. At thirty, I was again more worn than at twenty. Now I am past sixty–two, and when I look back to fifty, I seemed still strong and full.

"World–Honored One, although I see this hidden change, its passing away does not happen only over ten years. If I consider it more subtly, its change is not merely from decade to decade. Instead, it is not only year by year; it is also month by month. Nor is it only month by month; it is also day by day. If I contemplate it deeply, then from moment to moment, thought after thought, it never pauses. Therefore I know that this body of mine will in the end pass into destruction."

The Buddha said to the king, "You see that change and decay never cease, and from this you know that your body will perish. But at the very time of its perishing, do you know whether there is within you something that does not perish?"

King Prasenajit joined his palms and said to the Buddha, "I truly do not know."

The Buddha said, "I will now show you the nature that neither arises nor perishes. Great King, at what age did you

first see the Ganges?"

The king replied, "When I was three years old, my compassionate mother took me to pay homage to Jivaka, and at that time I already knew the waters of the Ganges."

The Buddha said, "Great King, as you have said, at twenty you were already more worn than at ten, and so on until sixty, as day, month, and year pass by, thought after thought in constant change. But the seeing with which you looked upon this river at three years of age–how was it when you were thirteen?"

The king replied, "It was no different from when I was three. And even now, at sixty–two, it is still no different."

The Buddha said, "You now lament that your hair is white and your face wrinkled. Your face has surely grown more wrinkled than in childhood. But when you now look upon this Ganges, does the seeing with which you behold it differ in old age from the seeing with which you beheld it as a child?"

The king replied, "No, World–Honored One."

The Buddha said, "Great King, though your face is wrinkled, the nature of this seeing has never wrinkled. What wrinkles is subject to change. What does not wrinkle is beyond change. What changes is subject to destruction. But what does not change is originally beyond birth and death. How, then, could it within itself undergo your life and death? And why do you

still follow Maskari and the others, who all say that after death this body is utterly annihilated?"

Hearing these words, the king believed and knew that after this life one leaves one state of birth and moves on to another. He and the whole assembly leapt with joy and gained what they had never had before.

Thereupon Ananda rose from his seat, bowed to the Buddha, knelt long with palms joined, and said to the Buddha, "If this seeing and hearing are indeed not subject to birth and death, then why does the World–Honored One call people like us those who have lost their true nature and act in inversion?"

At once the Tathagata lowered his golden arm, with the wheel–marked hand pointing downward, and showed it to Ananda, saying, "Do you now see my mudra hand as upright or inverted?"

Ananda said, "World–Honored One, the people of the world call this inverted, but I myself do not know what is upright and what is inverted."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "If the people of the world take this to be inverted, then what do they take to be upright?"

Ananda said, "If the Tathagata raises his arm and points the Tula–cotton hand upward toward the sky, that is called upright."

The Buddha then raised his arm and said to Ananda, "If this is called inverted because head and tail have been exchanged, then all people in the world merely see a twofold difference. With your body and the Tathagata's pure Dharma–body, the same principle applies. Yet you call the Tathagata's body upright and your own body inverted. Follow this carefully and consider: in what sense is this called inversion?"

At that time Ananda and the whole assembly stared at the Buddha with unblinking eyes, bewildered and not knowing wherein the inversion of body and mind lay.

Then the Buddha, moved by great compassion and pity for Ananda and the whole assembly, spoke forth with the voice of the great ocean and addressed the gathered company, saying:

"Good men, I have often said that form, mind, all conditions, the mental factors, and all dharmas that are taken as objects of mind are only manifestations of mind.

"Your body and your mind are both things appearing within the wondrous, luminous, true, subtle mind. How is it that you have lost your own original, wondrous, perfectly luminous mind, that precious bright and wondrous nature, and, while falling into delusion, mistaking the empty phenomena for your true nature?

"Lost in your primal ignorance, you mistake the false phenomena as the real emptiness. Then, darkness binds and becomes form. Mixed with false thoughts, thought takes

shape as the body. Gathering conditions, it stirs within and rushes outward. You take this dim, restless disturbance to be the nature of mind.

"Once you are confused about the mind, you are determined to regard it as dwelling within the body. Failing to know that mountains, rivers, empty space, the great earth, and even your own bodily form are all things appearing within the wondrous true mind, you are like one who, having ignored the clear waters of the boundless great ocean, recognizes only a single floating bubble and takes it to be the entire body of water, while all the rest is cast aside.

"So it is with you. There is no difference. Yet you say that what I have spoken may not be so."

Ananda, bearing the Buddha's compassionate rescue and profound instruction, wept and, with hands crossed in reverence, said to the Buddha:

"Although I have received from the Buddha such wondrous words, and have awakened to the wondrous, luminous mind as originally complete and the ever-abiding ground of mind, yet as I now listen to the Buddha's present voice of teaching, I still use this conditioned, grasping mind to receive it with reverence.

"Thus, though I have understood what the Buddha is now saying, I still do not dare to acknowledge it as my original mind-ground. I have only gained this understanding. I pray

that the Buddha, out of compassion, will expound the perfect sound, pull out the root of my doubt, and lead me back to the unsurpassed Way."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "You still listen to the Dharma with a conditioning mind that seeks and attaches. Therefore, even this Dharma becomes something conditioned, and you do not attain the nature of the Dharma itself.

"It is like a man who points at the moon with his hand in order to show it to someone. The other person should follow the finger and look at the moon. But if he turns back and looks only at the finger, taking the finger itself to be the body of the moon, then not only does he lose the moon, he also loses the meaning of the finger. Why? Because he mistakes the pointing finger for the bright moon. Nor is it only that he loses the finger. He also fails to distinguish light from darkness. Why? Because he takes the finger itself to be the bright nature of the moon, and so he understands neither brightness nor darkness.

"You are like this as well. If you take the faculty that distinguishes my spoken Dharma-sound to be your mind, then this mind should, apart from the sound it distinguishes, still possess a nature capable of discrimination.

"It is like a traveler lodging at an inn. He stays there for a while and then departs; he never remains there permanently. But the keeper of the inn has nowhere else to go, and so he is called the host. So it is in this case as well. If it were truly

your mind, then it would have nowhere to go. How, then, could it lose all discriminating nature once separated from sound?

"And this does not apply only to the discriminating mind that follows sound. Even the mind that distinguishes my appearance, once separated from all forms, has no discriminating nature. And so on, until even that state in which all discrimination seems absent—neither form nor emptiness—which the followers of Kausali mistake for the dark truth: if that nature apart from all dharma-conditions were your mind, then each of these would have somewhere to which it returns. How, then, could it be the host?"

Ananda said, "If the nature of my mind can each be returned somewhere, then how can the Tathagata say that the wondrous, luminous original mind is that which has no return? I only pray that the World-Honored One, out of compassion, will explain this for me."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "For the moment, take this seeing before you—this bright essence of seeing. Though this seeing is not yet the wondrous, pure, luminous mind itself, it is like the second moon, and not like the moon's reflection. You should listen closely. I will now show you that which has no return.

"Ananda, in this great lecture hall, the east stands open. When the sun rises into the sky, there is brightness. In the dark of night, when there is no moon and clouds and mist obscure

the sky, there is darkness. Through the openings of doors and windows, there is openness. Between walls and buildings, there is obstruction. Where distinctions appear, there is conditioned perception. In the midst of empty space, there is the nature of emptiness. In dim and dusty forms, there is murky dust. When the sky clears and vapors are gone, there is pure clarity.

"Ananda, you have seen all these changing appearances. I will now return each of them to the place from which it arises."

"How is this its original cause? Ananda, among these changing appearances, brightness returns to the sun. Why? Without the sun there is no brightness; therefore brightness belongs to the sun, and so it returns to the sun. Darkness returns to the dark moon. Openness returns to doors and windows. Obstruction returns to walls and houses. Conditioned distinction returns to discrimination. Dense emptiness returns to empty space. Murky dimness returns to dust. Pure clarity returns to clear weather. Thus, all things in the world fall within these kinds.

"But of these eight, to what will you return the bright essence of seeing? Why? If it returned to brightness, then when there is no brightness, there should be no seeing of darkness. Yet though brightness, darkness, and the other appearances differ in many ways, the seeing itself does not differ.

"All that can be returned is naturally not you. That which

cannot be returned—if it is not you, then who is it? Therefore, you should know that your mind is originally wondrous, bright, and pure. Yet you yourself, in confusion and delusion, have lost your own root and have therefore undergone the wheel of rebirth. In birth and death you are constantly carried along and drowned. For this reason the Tathagata says that you are truly to be pitied."

Ananda said, "Although I now know that this seeing-nature has no place to which it returns, how am I to know that it is truly my own nature?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "I will now ask you this. At present, you have not yet attained the purity of no-outflows. Yet, by the Buddha's spiritual power, your sight reaches the first dhyana without obstruction. Aniruddha sees Jambudvipa as though looking at an amalaka fruit in the palm of his hand. The Bodhisattvas see hundreds of thousands of worlds. The Tathagatas of the ten directions behold, without anything beyond their sight, pure lands as numerous as motes of dust. Ordinary beings, by contrast, can see no farther than a few inches.

"Ananda, now let you and me together observe the palace where the Four Heavenly Kings dwell, and from there survey all that moves upon water, land, and in the air. Though there are dim and bright places and all kinds of differing forms, none of them are anything but objects before you, distinguished and obstructing one another.

“You should now, within all that is seen here, distinguish self and other. I will help you choose, within seeing itself, what is your own true essence and what is merely the appearance of things.”

“Ananda, trace your seeing to its farthest reach. From the palaces of the sun and moon—these are objects, not you. And further, as far as the Seven Golden Mountains, look all around with careful attention. Though there are all kinds of lights, they too are objects, not you. Then looking gradually farther on, you see clouds rising, birds flying, wind moving, dust stirring, trees, mountains, rivers, grasses, plants, people, and animals - all of these are objects, not you.

“Ananda, all these things, whether near or far, though differing in many ways, are all equally beheld by the pure seeing-essence of yours. The various kinds of objects have their own distinctions, but the seeing-nature itself has no distinction. This subtle, wondrous brightness is truly your seeing-nature.

“If seeing were an object, then you should also be able to see my seeing. If to see the same thing were called seeing my seeing, then when I do not see, why do you not see the place of my not-seeing? If you say you do see my not-seeing, then what you see cannot truly be the mark of that not-seeing. But if you do not see the place of my not-seeing, then it is naturally not a thing at all. And if it is not a thing, how can it be anything other than you?”

“Further, when you are seeing an object, if you see the object, then the object should also see you. In that case, their natures would become confused and mixed, so that neither you, nor I, nor all the world could remain properly established.

“Ananda, if, when you are seeing, that seeing is you and not I, then the seeing-nature, being all-pervasive, is none other than you. Why then do you doubt your own true nature? If your own nature were not true, why would you seek truth from me?

“Ananda said to the Buddha, ‘World-Honored One, if this seeing-nature is truly myself and not anything else, then when I am with the Tathagata and behold the wondrous treasure-palaces of the Four Heavenly Kings, or dwell in the palaces of the sun and moon, this seeing extends completely throughout the Saha world. But when I return to the monastery, I see only the sangharama; and when I enter the pure-mind lecture hall, I see only the eaves and corridors.

‘World-Honored One, if this seeing is as you have said, and if its substance is originally all-pervasive throughout an entire world, then why, now in this room, does it seem to fill only one room? Why has this seeing shrunk from great to small? Or is it that walls and buildings press it in and cut it off? I do not know where the meaning of this lies. I pray that the Tathagata, in great compassion, will explain it for me.’”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “All distinctions in the world of great and small, inner and outer, together with all activities

and conditions, belong to the objects before you. One should not say that seeing itself expands or contracts.

“Take the example of seeing square space within a square vessel. Let me ask you: is the square space in that square vessel truly fixed as square, or is it not fixed as square? If it were fixed as square, then when a round vessel is placed there, the space should not appear round. If it were not fixed as square, then within a square vessel there should be no square space. You say you do not know where the meaning of this lies. The principle is just thus. How can it be said to be located anywhere?

“Ananda, if you wish it to enter into that which is neither square nor round, then simply remove the square vessel. The nature of space has no square form. One should not say that, beyond removing the vessel, one must further remove some square appearance belonging to space itself.

“Ananda, if, as you ask, entering a room causes seeing to shrink and become small, then when you lift your eyes to the sun, do you draw your seeing out until it reaches the face of the sun? And if walls and buildings could press in and cut seeing off, then when a small opening is made through them, would there not be some trace showing where it continues? This is not so.

“All beings, from beginningless time, have mistaken themselves for things, have lost their original mind, and are turned about by things. Therefore, within this delusion, they

speak of seeing what is great and what is small. But if one can turn things instead of being turned by them, then one is the same as the Tathagata: body and mind perfectly luminous, abiding in the unmoving place of enlightenment. On the tip of a single hair one may contain all the lands of the ten directions."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, if this pure seeing is truly my wondrous nature, and if this wondrous nature is now present before me, then this seeing must be my true self. But if that is so, what then are this body and mind of mine? And yet this present body and mind do indeed possess the reality of discrimination, whereas that seeing has no separate power by which it distinguishes my body. If this seeing truly is my mind, and it is what enables me now to see, then the seeing-nature would truly be myself, and the body would not be myself. How is this any different from what the Tathagata earlier challenged when he said that an object could see me? I only pray that the Great Compassionate One will open up what I have not yet understood."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "What you now say—that the seeing is present before you—is not true. If it were really before you, and if you truly saw it, then this seeing-essence, since it would have a definite place, could not fail to be pointed out.

"Now as we sit together in the Jeta Grove, looking everywhere over the forests, streams, and halls, upward to the sun and moon, and outward toward the Ganges, you may

here before my lion-seat raise your hand and point out these various appearances: what is shaded is the grove, what is bright is the sun, what obstructs is the wall, what is open is the sky, and so on, down even to grasses, trees, and the finest hairs. Though large and small differ, whatever has form may be pointed out.

"If you insist that seeing is now present before you, then you should with your hand clearly and firmly point out for me: what exactly is the seeing? Ananda, you should know: if space were the seeing, then once it had become seeing, what would still count as space? And if things were the seeing, then once they had become seeing, what would still count as things?

"You may carefully strip apart all appearances and separate out that pure, bright, subtle, wondrous source of seeing. Then point it out to me as clearly and unmistakably as you point out the various objects before you."

Ānanda, the first of these is this:

If you wish to cast aside the path of the Śrāvakas, cultivate the Bodhisattva Vehicle, and enter the Buddha's knowledge and vision, then you must carefully examine whether the mind brought forth on the causal ground is the same as, or different from, the awakening on the ground of fruition.

Ānanda, if on the causal ground you take a mind of arising and ceasing as the basis of cultivation, and yet seek the

Buddha Vehicle which is unborn and undying, there can be no such thing.

For this reason, you should clearly observe that all conditioned things in the material world, all that can be made, are subject to change and destruction.

Ānanda, look at the things of the world that can be made: which of them does not decay? Yet one never hears of empty space rotting away. Why is this? Because empty space is not something made. Therefore, from beginning to end, it is without destruction or extinction.

But within your own body, what is solid is earth, what is moist is water, what is warm to the touch is fire, and what moves is wind. By these four entanglements, your still, perfect, wondrously awakened bright mind is divided into seeing, hearing, awareness, and discernment. From beginning to end, there are five layers of turbidity.

The Buddha said, "So it is, so it is."

The Buddha then said again to Ānanda:

"As you have said, there is no pure seeing that, apart from all things, possesses a separate nature of its own. Then among all the things you point out, there is none that is the seer.

"Now I tell you further: you and the Thus Come One are sitting here in the Jeta Grove. Look again at the grove and

garden, and even to the sun and moon. Among all these differing appearances, there is surely no seeing-essence there for you to point to.

"Now you must make it clear: among all these things, which one is not the seeing?"

Ānanda said:

"I truly behold this whole Jeta Grove, yet I do not know which among these is not the seeing.

"Why is this? If the tree were not the seeing, how could I see the tree? But if the tree were itself the seeing, then how could it still be the tree? And so on, even to empty space: if empty space were not the seeing, how could I see empty space? But if empty space were itself the seeing, then how could it still be empty space?

"I have thought it over as well: among these myriad appearances, examined in the finest detail, there is nothing that is not the seeing."

The Buddha said, "So it is, so it is."

Then those in the great assembly who had not yet reached the stage beyond learning, hearing the Buddha's words, were bewildered and did not understand where this meaning began or ended. All at once they grew fearful and shaken, losing what they had been relying on.

The Thus Come One, knowing that their minds were disturbed and alarmed, gave rise to compassion and comforted Ānanda and the whole assembly:

“Good men, the unsurpassed Dharma King speaks what is true. He speaks in accordance with reality, without deception and without falsehood. This is not like Maskari’s four kinds of evasive doctrines of undying confusion.

“You must examine this carefully and thoughtfully, and do not fail my compassionate concern for you.”

At that time Mañjuśrī, the Dharma Prince, out of compassion for the fourfold assembly, rose from his seat in the midst of the great gathering, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, joined his palms respectfully, and said to the Buddha:

“World-Honored One, this great assembly has not understood the Thus Come One’s teaching concerning the two kinds of refined seeing in relation to form and emptiness, and the meaning of what is and what is not.

“World-Honored One, if these appearances before us - form, emptiness, and the like - are the seeing, then they should be something that can be pointed out. But if they are not the seeing, then there should be nothing seen at all.

“And now we do not know where the meaning of this lies. Therefore fear has arisen among us. It is not because the good roots planted in former times are scant or shallow.

“We only pray that the Thus Come One, in great compassion, will make clear what these appearances are, and what this refined seeing is, and why, between the two, there is neither ‘is’ nor ‘is not.’”

The Buddha said to Mañjuśrī and to the whole great assembly:

“The Thus Come Ones of the ten directions, and the great Bodhisattvas, abiding in samādhi as they dwell in their own realization, regard seeing and the objects of seeing, together with the appearances formed by thought, as flowers in empty space, originally without any real existence.

“This seeing and its objects are originally the wondrous, pure, luminous substance of Bodhi itself. How, then, could there be within them any ‘is’ or ‘is not’?

“Mañjuśrī, I now ask you: as you are Mañjuśrī, is there yet another Mañjuśrī that is Mañjuśrī? Or is there no Mañjuśrī?”

Mañjuśrī replied:

“So it is, World-Honored One. I am truly Mañjuśrī. There is no ‘this one is Mañjuśrī.’

“Why is this so? If there were such a ‘this one,’ then there would be two Mañjuśrīs. Yet as I am today, it is not that there is no Mañjuśrī. Within this, in truth, there are no two marks of ‘is’ and ‘is not.’”

The Buddha said:

“This wondrous bright seeing, together with empty space and the dust-like objects, is likewise so. It is originally the wondrous bright, unsurpassed Bodhi—the pure, perfect, true mind. Delusion makes it into form and emptiness, and into hearing and seeing.

“It is like a second moon: which one could be called the moon, and which one not the moon?

“Mañjuśrī, there is only the one true moon. Between the two, there is of itself no such thing as ‘this is the moon’ and ‘this is not the moon.’

“So now, when you observe seeing and its objects, and all the various discriminations that arise, these are called false thoughts. Within them you cannot establish what is ‘is’ and what is ‘is not.’

“It is because this is the true, essential, wondrously awakened bright nature that it enables you to go beyond what can be pointed out and what cannot be pointed out.”

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

“World-Honored One, just as the Dharma King has said, the field of awareness pervades the worlds of the ten directions, serene and ever-abiding, its nature neither arising nor ceasing. In what way does this differ from the limited vision of truth

proclaimed by the active brahmin Savikara, and by those other heretic groups, such as the ash-smearers, who proclaim a true self pervading the ten directions?

“World-Honored One, you also once, on Mount Laṅkā, expounded this meaning for Mahāmati and the others. Those heretics always speak of naturalness, whereas the Buddha speaks of causes and conditions, which are not the same as their teaching.

“Now, as I contemplate this awakened nature—naturally unborn and undying, far removed from all false and inverted notions—it seems not to belong to causes and conditions, and yet it seems akin to what they call naturalness.

“How should this be explained, so that I do not fall into the various wrong paths, but may attain the wondrous bright nature of the true mind and awakened awareness?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

“In the way I have now explained this to you, I have already spoken truthfully and with skillful means. Yet you still have not understood, and so you mistake it for naturalness.

Ānanda, if it truly were natural, then you should first clearly discern a nature that truly belongs to naturalness itself.

Now look into this wondrous bright seeing: what do you take as its own self-nature?

Do you take brightness as its self?

Or darkness as its self?

Or emptiness as its self?

Or obstruction as its self?

Ānanda, if brightness were its self, then it should not see darkness.

And if emptiness were taken as its self-nature, then it should not see obstruction.

And so on, if darkness and the other such appearances were taken as its self, then when brightness is present, the nature of seeing should be cut off and extinguished. How then could it see brightness?"

Ānanda said:

"Then this wondrous seeing must in its nature not be a matter of naturalness. I now take it that it arises from causes and conditions. Yet my mind is still not clear, and so I come before the Thus Come One to ask: in what way does this accord with the nature of causes and conditions?"

The Buddha said:

"You speak of causes and conditions. I will ask you again.

Since the nature of seeing is now present before you in seeing, does this seeing arise because of brightness, because of darkness, because of emptiness, or because of obstruction?

Ānanda, if it arose because of brightness, then it should not see darkness. If it arose because of darkness, then it should not see brightness. And so on: whether from emptiness or from obstruction, it is the same as with brightness and darkness.

Further, Ānanda, does this seeing depend on brightness in order to be seeing, depend on darkness in order to be seeing, depend on emptiness in order to be seeing, or depend on obstruction in order to be seeing?

Ānanda, if it depended on emptiness, then it should not see obstruction. If it depended on obstruction, then it should not see emptiness. And so on: whether it depended on brightness or on darkness, it is the same as with emptiness and obstruction.

You should know, then, that this refined awareness, wondrously bright, is neither cause nor condition; neither naturalness nor non-naturalness; neither ‘not’ nor ‘not-not’; neither ‘is’ nor ‘is-not.’ Apart from all marks, it is precisely all dharmas.

How then can you still set your mind within this and make discriminations by means of the worldly terms of idle discourse?

It is like trying to seize and rub empty space with your hand: you only weary yourself in vain. How could empty space ever submit to your grasp?"

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, if the wondrous awakened nature is indeed neither cause nor condition, then why has the World-Honored One so often declared to the bhikṣus that the nature of seeing is endowed with four conditions—namely, emptiness, light, mind, and eye? What is the meaning of this?"

The Buddha said:

"Ānanda, what I spoke of as the various worldly marks of causes and conditions is not the truth of the highest meaning.

Ānanda, I ask you again: when people in the world say, 'I am able to see,' what is called seeing? And what is called not seeing?"

Ānanda said:

"People in the world, by means of the light of the sun, moon, and lamps, see the various appearances of things, and call that seeing. But if these three kinds of light are absent, then they cannot see."

Ānanda, if when there is no light one calls that "not seeing,"

then one should also not see darkness. But if one does indeed see darkness, this is only the absence of light—how can it be called the absence of seeing?

Ānanda, if, when in darkness, not seeing brightness is called "not seeing," then now, when in brightness, not seeing the appearance of darkness should also be called "not seeing." If so, both states would be called "not seeing."

But if these two appearances simply displace one another, it is not that your seeing-nature is for a time absent within them. Thus you should know that both cases are in fact called seeing. How, then, can they be called not seeing?

Therefore, Ānanda, you should now know this:

when seeing brightness, the seeing is not brightness;

when seeing darkness, the seeing is not darkness;

when seeing emptiness, the seeing is not emptiness;

when seeing obstruction, the seeing is not obstruction.

These four points are thus established.

You should further know: when seeing is itself seen, that which is seen is not the true seeing. Seeing is even apart from seeing; seeing cannot reach it. How then can you still speak of causes and conditions, of naturalness, or of the marks of

combination?

You Śrāvakas are narrow and inferior in capacity, lacking broad understanding, and thus cannot penetrate the pure true reality. I now instruct you: you must reflect well upon this. Do not grow weary on the wondrous path to Bodhi.

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, although the Buddha, for the sake of people such as us, has explained causes and conditions, naturalness, the various marks of combination, and also non-combination, our minds have still not opened. And now, on hearing further that 'seeing seeing is not seeing,' our confusion and perplexity have only increased.

"We humbly pray that, in your great compassion, you will bestow upon us the great eye of wisdom, and make clear to us the bright purity of the awakened mind."

Having spoken thus, he bowed with tears, prostrated himself, and received the sacred instruction.

At that time the World-Honored One, out of compassion for Ānanda and the whole great assembly, and being about to expound the great dhāraṇī, the various samādhis, and the wondrous path of cultivation, said to Ānanda:

"Though you are strong in memory, this only increases your learning. As for the subtle contemplation and inward

illumination of śamatha, your mind has not yet fully understood it. Listen carefully now. I shall explain and distinguish it for you, and also enable those in the future who still have outflows to attain the fruit of Bodhi.

"Ānanda, all living beings revolve in the world because of two inverted false views of discriminating perception. From these they arise where they are, and according to these karmas they turn in the wheel.

"What are the two false views?

"One is the false view of *the false seeing of differentiated karma among living beings.*

The second is *the false view of shared karma among living beings.*"

What is meant by *the false seeing of differentiated karma*?

Ānanda, suppose there is a person in the world whose eyes are afflicted with a reddish film. At night, when he looks at a lamp, he sees around the light a separate circular halo, layered with the five colors.

What do you think? Is that round light appearing around the lamp at night actually the color of the lamp, or is it the color produced by seeing?

Ānanda, if it were the lamp's own color, then why do those

who do not have diseased eyes not see it as well, while this circular halo is seen only by the one whose eyes are afflicted?

But if it were the color produced by seeing, then once seeing had itself become a visible color, what should we call that by which the afflicted man sees the circular halo?

Further, Ānanda, if this circular halo existed apart from the lamp, then when one looked at nearby screens, curtains, tables, and mats, circular halos should also appear there. And if it existed apart from seeing, then it should not be something the eye beholds. How then could the afflicted man's eye see the circular halo?

Therefore you should know: the visible form truly belongs to the lamp; the diseased seeing turns it into a halo. Both the halo and the seeing of it belong to the eye-affliction, yet the awareness that knows the affliction is not itself diseased.

One should never say that it is the lamp, or that it is the seeing; nor should one say that, between the two, there is something that is neither lamp nor seeing.

It is like a second moon: it is neither the actual moon nor merely a shadow. Why is this? Because the perception of the second moon is produced by pressing on the eye.

A person of understanding would not say that the pressing itself is either a real form or not a real form, or that it is either apart from seeing or not apart from seeing. So it is here as

well. Since this is something produced by the eye's affliction, if one now wishes to name it, who can say that it is the lamp or that it is the seeing? How much less can one go on to discriminate that it is neither lamp nor seeing?

What is meant by *the false view of shared karma among living beings*?

Ānanda, in this Jambudvīpa, apart from the great ocean waters, there are three thousand continents in the level lands between. In the great central continent, measuring across east and west, there are in all twenty-three hundred great countries. The remaining smaller continents lie in the various seas; among them, some may contain two or three hundred countries, some only one or two, and some as many as thirty, forty, or fifty.

Ānanda, suppose among these there is a small continent with only two countries. If the people of only one of those countries together experience the same evil condition, then the beings of that land, in that small continent, will behold all manner of inauspicious appearances: perhaps they see two suns, or two moons, or even halos and ring-signs, comets, baleful stars, meteors in flight, rainbows and secondary rainbows, and all sorts of evil omens.

Only that one country sees them. The beings of the other country have never seen them, nor do they even hear of them.

Ānanda, I will now, for your sake, use these two matters to

clarify one another from both sides.

Ānanda, in the case of that living being's false seeing of differentiated karma, he looks at the lamp-light and sees the circular halo that appears there. Though it seems like an external object, in the end, for the one who sees it, it is produced by the disease of the eye. The eye-disease is simply fatigue in the act of seeing; it is not produced by the form itself. Yet the one who is aware of the eye-disease is never himself at fault in seeing.

Apply this now to yourself: when you use your eyes to look upon mountains, rivers, lands, and all living beings, all of these are produced by the diseased seeing that has gone on since beginningless time. Seeing and the objects of seeing appear like a scene before you, yet in truth they are only the diseased condition of the seeing-nature within the brightness of awareness itself. The awareness that takes seeing as something seen is already this disease. But the fundamentally awakened, bright mind, in its awareness of these conditions, is not diseased. The awareness that is aware of the diseased condition is not itself within the disease. This is what is truly meant by seeing seeing. How could it still be called seeing, hearing, awareness, or knowing?

Therefore, Ānanda, what now sees me, sees you, and sees all the ten kinds of living beings in the world is all diseased seeing. But that which is not the diseased seeing is the true pure essence of seeing. Because its nature is not diseased, it is not called seeing in that ordinary sense.

Ānanda, as for that living beings' false seeing shared in common, compare it to the false seeing of one person with differentiated karma. That one man with diseased eyes corresponds to that one country. The circular halo he sees is produced by the delusion of his eye-disease. In the same way, the inauspicious signs seen by those beings who share the same karma arise from the baleful miasma within that shared karma. Both are produced from the false seeing that has gone on since beginningless time.

Apply this further to Jambudvīpa, to its three thousand continents, to the four great seas, to the Sahā world, and even to the various conditioned lands of the ten directions and all living beings therein: all are nothing but the false diseased conditions of seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing within the wondrous mind of awakened brightness, originally free of outflows. Through combination they falsely arise; through combination they falsely die.

If one can become far removed from all conditions of combination and also from non-combination, then one will further extinguish all causes of birth and death, and the nature of Bodhi, perfect and complete, unborn and undying, will appear. The pure original mind, the fundamental awakening, abides forever.

Ānanda, although you have already awakened to the fact that the fundamental, wondrous brightness of original enlightenment is neither conditioned by causes and conditions nor of the nature of spontaneity, you still do not

yet understand that this awakened source is neither born of combination nor apart from combination.

Ānanda, I will now again ask you by means of the objects before you. You still take all worldly false notions of combination and the various causal conditions, and thus remain in doubt, wondering whether the Bodhi-mind itself arises through combination.

Then tell me: this pure and wondrous essence of seeing that is now yours—is it combined with brightness, combined with darkness, combined with openness, or combined with obstruction?

If it is combined with brightness, then as you look at brightness now present before you, where is the seeing mixed in with it? If the appearance of seeing can be distinguished, what form does that mixture take? If it is not the seeing, how can it see brightness? But if it is the seeing itself, then how can seeing see seeing? If seeing were fully complete there, where would there be room for combination with brightness? And if brightness were fully complete there, then it would not fit with seeing in combination. Seeing must then be different from brightness; but once mixed, brightness would lose its own nature and its very name. If, by mixing, brightness loses its nature, then "combining with brightness" is meaningless.

The same is true of darkness, openness, and all forms of obstruction.

Further, Ānanda, this pure and wondrous essence of seeing that is now yours—is it joined to brightness, joined to darkness, joined to openness, or joined to obstruction?

If it is joined to brightness, then when darkness comes and the appearance of brightness is gone, this seeing should no longer be joined to any darkness. How then could it see darkness? If, when it sees darkness, it is not joined to darkness, then if it were joined to brightness, it should not really see brightness either. If it does not see brightness, how can it be said to be joined to brightness and yet clearly know that brightness is not darkness?

The same is true of darkness, openness, and all forms of obstruction.

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, as I reflect on it, this wondrous source of awakened awareness, together with these objects and conditions, and with the thoughts and deliberations of the mind, must not be a case of combination, must it?"

The Buddha said:

"So now you say that awakened awareness is not combined. I will ask you again. If this wondrous pure essence of seeing is not combined, is it not combined with light, not combined with darkness, not combined with openness, or not combined with obstruction?

If it is not combined with light, then seeing and light must have a boundary between them. Look carefully: where is the light, and where is the seeing? At what point, in the seeing or in the light, is that boundary drawn?

Ānanda, if within the boundary of light there is necessarily no seeing, then the two do not reach one another, and seeing could not itself know where the appearance of light is. How then could a boundary be established? The same is true of darkness, openness, and all forms of obstruction.

Again, if this wondrous pure essence of seeing is not combined, is it not joined with light, not joined with darkness, not joined with openness, or not joined with obstruction?

If it is not joined with light, then seeing and light would stand opposed in nature, like the ear and light, which never come into contact. If seeing does not even know where the appearance of light is, how can one determine the meaning of joined and not joined? The same is true of darkness, openness, and all forms of obstruction."

Ānanda, you still do not yet understand that all these floating dusts, all these illusory and transforming appearances, arise where they arise and perish where they perish. Though in their illusory falseness they are spoken of as appearances, in their true nature they are none other than the wondrous awakened, luminous essence itself.

So it is, even to the five skandhas and the six entrances, from

the twelve sense-fields up to the eighteen realms: through the coming together of causes and conditions, there is the false appearance of arising; through the separation of causes and conditions, there is the false designation of ceasing.

You have never yet understood that arising and ceasing, going and coming, are in themselves the Tathāgata-garbha—the ever-abiding, wondrously bright, unmoving, all-pervading, wondrous True Suchness-nature.

With that true and constant nature, if you examine going and coming, delusion and awakening, birth and death, you ultimately would find all those conditions are nowhere to be found.

Ānanda, why is it that the five skandhas are in themselves the Tathāgata-garbha, the wondrous nature of True Suchness?

Ānanda, suppose a man with clear eyes looks into the bright, open sky and sees only empty clarity, with nothing at all within it. Then, for no reason, without moving his eyes, he stares fixedly until strain arises, and in empty space he begins to see strange flowers, along with all kinds of confused and unreal appearances. You should know that the skandha of form is likewise like this.

Ānanda, these strange flowers do not come from the sky, nor do they come forth from the eyes.

Thus, Ānanda, if they came from the sky, then having come

from the sky, they should also return into the sky. But if there were coming out and going back in, then that would not be empty space. And if space were not space, it could not contain the arising and vanishing of those flower-appearances any more than Ānanda could contain another Ānanda.

If they came forth from the eyes, then having come from the eyes, they should also return into the eyes. If the nature of these flowers truly came from the eyes, then they should themselves be capable of seeing. If they were capable of seeing, then when they went out and became flowers in space, they should on returning be able to see the eyes. If they were not capable of seeing, then when they went out they would obscure the sky, and when they returned they should obscure the eyes.

Moreover, when one sees those flowers, the eyes should not themselves be obscured. How then can eyes that are clouded still be called clear eyes?

Therefore, you should know that the skandha of form is false and illusory. In its origin it is neither produced by causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity.

Ānanda, it is like a person whose hands and feet are at ease, whose whole body is well balanced and in harmony, and who suddenly seems to forget the body altogether, so that there is no sense of either agreeable or adverse sensation. Then, for no reason, he rubs the palms of his two hands together in empty space, and within the two hands there falsely arise such

sensations as roughness and smoothness, cold and warmth. You should know that the skandha of sensations is likewise so.

Ānanda, these illusory sensations of touch do not come from empty space, nor do they come forth from the palms.

Thus, Ānanda, if they came from empty space, then since they can touch the palms, why do they not also touch the body? Empty space should not be choosing where it comes to make contact.

If they came forth from the palms, then they should not need to wait for the two palms to come together. And if they truly came out from the palms, then when the palms joined, the palms should know it; when they separated, the sensation of touch should go back in. Then the arms, wrists, bones, and marrow should also be aware of the track by which it entered. There would necessarily have to be an aware mind that knew its going out and coming in. In that case, there would already be something moving back and forth within the body. Why should one have to wait for contact in order for it to be called touch?

Therefore, you should know that the skandha of sensations is false and illusory. In its origin it is neither due to causes and conditions nor of the nature of spontaneity.

Ānanda, it is like a person speaking of sour plums, and saliva comes forth in the mouth; or thinking of stepping over a

precipice, and the soles of the feet grow weak and tingling. You should know that the skandha of perceptions is likewise so.

Ānanda, such talk of sourness does not arise from the plums, nor does it enter from the mouth.

Thus, Ānanda, if it came from the plums, then the plums should speak of themselves—why should they wait for someone to mention them? If it entered from the mouth, then the mouth itself should hear it—why should there be any need to wait for the ear? And if the ear alone heard it, then why does this saliva not come forth from the ear?

The imagining of stepping over a precipice is of the same kind as this spoken example.

Therefore you should know that the skandha of perceptions is false and illusory. In its origin it is neither due to causes and conditions nor of the nature of spontaneity.

Ānanda, it is like a rushing waterfall: the waves follow one another in unbroken succession, the earlier limit and the later limit never overstepping one another. You should know that the skandha of mental formations is likewise so.

Ānanda, this flowing nature does not arise from emptiness, does not come from water, is not simply the nature of water itself, nor does it exist apart from emptiness and water.

Thus, Ānanda, if it arose from emptiness, then all the boundless empty space of the ten directions would become an endless current, and the whole world would naturally be drowned in it.

If it came from water, then this nature of the rushing stream should be something other than water, and since it would have its own distinct appearance, it should be plainly present now.

If it were simply the nature of water itself, then when the water is still and clear, it should no longer be the substance of water.

And if it existed apart from emptiness and water, emptiness has nothing outside itself, and apart from water there is no current.

Therefore, you should know that the skandha of mental formations is false and illusory. In its origin it is neither due to causes and conditions nor of the nature of spontaneity.

Ānanda, it is like a man who takes a jar, seals up its two openings, and carries the empty space enclosed within it a thousand miles away, intending to deliver it to another land. You should know that the skandha of consciousness is likewise so.

Ānanda, that empty space neither comes from the other place nor enters into this one. If it came from the other place, then

once the jar had carried away the space it contained, the place where the jar originally was should have less empty space. If it entered into this place, then when the openings were unsealed and the jar was overturned, one should be able to see the empty space come out.

Therefore, you should know that the skandha of consciousness is false and illusory. In its origin it is neither due to causes and conditions nor of the nature of spontaneity.

III

Further, Ānanda, why is it that the six sense-entrances are in themselves the Tathāgata-garbha, the wondrous nature of True Suchness?

Ānanda, take that person whose eyes, from strained staring, become fatigued. Both the eyes themselves and that fatigue are alike but manifestations of weariness arising within Bodhi. Because of the two false dusts of light and darkness, seeing arises in between, drawing in the images of those dusty objects; this is called the nature of seeing.

Yet apart from those two dusts, light and darkness, this seeing has in the end no substance of its own.

Thus, Ānanda, you should know that this seeing does not come from light or darkness, does not issue from the eye faculty, and is not born from emptiness.

Why is this so?

If it came from light, then when darkness arose, light would be extinguished, and such seeing should not be able to see darkness.

If it came from darkness, then when light arose, darkness would be extinguished, and such seeing should not be able to see light.

If it were born from the eye faculty, then there would necessarily be neither light nor darkness. In that case, the very essence of seeing would have no nature of its own.

If it came forth from emptiness, then when it first looked upon the dusty objects, it should on returning also be able to see the eye faculty itself. And if emptiness were itself what sees, what would that have to do with your entrance?

Therefore, you should know that the eye-entrance is false and illusory. In its true nature, it is neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Ananda, suppose there were a man who quickly pressed shut his two ears with his fingers. Because the ear-faculty is strained, a sound arises within his head. Both the ear and that strain are merely appearances of fatigue brought about in Bodhi through fixed staring. Because of the two false dusts of movement and stillness, hearing arises in between, drawing in these dust-appearances and taking them as the nature of hearing. Yet apart from those two dusts of movement and stillness, this hearing has no substance at all.

"So it is, Ananda. You should know that this hearing does not come from movement or stillness. It does not come forth from the faculty, nor is it produced in empty space. Why is this so? If it came from stillness, then when movement arose, stillness would be destroyed, and it should not be able to hear movement. If it came from movement, then when stillness

arose, movement would be destroyed, and it should not be able to perceive stillness. If it came from the faculty, then apart from movement and stillness, this hearing-body would have no nature of its own. And if it arose from empty space, then if empty space itself possessed hearing as its nature, it would no longer be empty space. Moreover, if empty space itself could hear, what concern would that have with your ear-faculty?

"Therefore, you should know that the ear-entrance is false and illusory. In its true nature, it is neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Ananda, suppose there were a man who sharply drew in his breath through the nose. After doing so for a long time, the nose became fatigued, and within the nose there arose the sensation of cold. From that sensation he distinguishes openness and blockage, emptiness and solidity, and even all fragrances and foul odors. The nose and that fatigue alike are only appearances of strain brought about in Bodhi through fixed staring. Because of the two false dusts of openness and blockage, smelling arises in between, drawing in these dust-appearances and taking them as the nature of smelling. Yet apart from those two dusts of openness and blockage, this smelling has no substance at all.

"You should know, then, that this smelling does not come from openness or blockage. It does not come forth from the faculty, nor is it produced in empty space. Why is this so? If

it came from openness, then when blockage arose, openness would vanish—how then could blockage be known? And if it existed because of blockage, then when openness appeared there should be no smelling at all—how then could fragrance, stench, and the like be made known?

"If it came from the faculty, then apart from openness and blockage, this smelling-body would have no nature of its own. And if it arose from empty space, then that smelling should itself turn back and smell your nose. If empty space itself possessed smelling, what concern would that have with your nose-entrance?

"Therefore, you should know that the nose-entrance is false and illusory. In its true nature, it is neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Ananda, suppose there were a man who licked his lips with his tongue. If he licked for a long time until the tongue became fatigued, then if the man were ill there would be a bitter taste, while in a healthy man there would be a slight sweetness. From sweetness and bitterness, the tongue-faculty is thereby made manifest; when it is not moving, the bland taste is always there. The tongue and that fatigue alike are only appearances of strain brought about in Bodhi through fixed staring. Because of the two false dusts of sweetness or bitterness and blandness, knowing arises in between, drawing in these dust-appearances and taking them as the nature of tasting. Yet apart from those two dusts—sweetness/bitterness

and blandness—this tasting has no substance at all.

“So it is, Ananda. You should know that this awareness of tasting bitterness and blandness does not come from sweetness and bitterness. Nor does it arise because of blandness. Nor does it come forth from the tongue-faculty. Nor is it produced in empty space. Why is this so? If it came from sweetness and bitterness, then when blandness appeared, that knowing should cease— how then could blandness be known? And if it came from blandness, then when sweetness appeared, that knowing should perish—how then could the two appearances of sweetness and bitterness be known?

“If it came from the tongue, then there would be no dusts of sweetness, blandness, and bitterness; therefore, this tasting faculty would have no nature of its own. And if it arose from empty space, then empty space itself would be what tastes—it would not be your mouth that knows. And if empty space itself could know, what concern would that have with your tongue-entrance?

“Therefore, you should know that the tongue-entrance is false and illusory. In its true nature, it is neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity.”

“Ananda, suppose there were a man who touched a hot hand with a cold hand. If the force of the cold were greater, the hot hand would become cold; if the force of the heat were stronger, the cold hand would become hot. Thus, through the

contact of this joined sensation, the awareness of separation is made manifest; when the interacting force is established, it is because of the strained sensation. The body and that strain alike are only appearances of fatigue brought about in Bodhi through fixed staring. Because of the two false dusts of separation and contact, awareness arises in between, drawing in these dust-appearances and taking them as the nature of bodily sensation. Yet apart from those dusts of separation, contact, opposition, and accord, this faculty of bodily awareness has no substance at all.

"So it is, Ananda. You should know that this awareness does not come from separation or contact. Nor does it arise from opposition or accord. It does not issue from the faculty, nor is it produced in empty space. Why is this so? If it came when there was contact, then when separation occurred, contact would already be gone—how then could separation be felt? And the two appearances of opposition and accord are likewise so.

"If it came from the faculty, then apart from the four appearances of separation, contact, opposition, and accord, your body's knowing would originally have no nature of its own. And if it came from empty space, then empty space itself would possess awareness. What concern would that have with your body-entrance?

"Therefore, you should know that the body-entrance is false and illusory. In its true nature, it is neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of

spontaneity."

"Ananda, suppose there were a man who, when weary, fell asleep; when fully asleep, then awoke; on encountering objects, remembered them; and when memory was lost, forgot them. These are the inverted appearances of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing. Gathering in habitual impressions, one after another returns within, never overstepping one another: this is called the mind-faculty. The mind and that fatigue alike are only appearances of strain brought about in Bodhi through fixed staring. Because of the two false dusts of arising and ceasing, knowing collects in between, drawing in the inner dust, while seeing and hearing flow backward; yet that flow does not reach the source. This is called the nature of awareness and knowing. But apart from those two dusts of waking and sleeping, arising and ceasing, this awareness and knowing has no substance at all.

"So it is, Ananda. You should know that this faculty of awareness and knowing does not come from waking and sleeping. It does not arise from arising and ceasing. It does not issue from the faculty, nor is it produced in empty space. Why is this so? If it came from waking, then when sleep appeared, waking would vanish—what then would count as sleep? If it existed when there is arising, then when ceasing came it would be the same as nothing—who then would receive the ceasing? And if it existed through ceasing, then when arising appeared, ceasing would be gone—who then could know arising?

“If it came from the faculty, then waking and sleeping would open and close along with the body. Apart from those two states, this awareness—and—knowing would be like flowers in empty space, ultimately without any nature at all. And if it arose from empty space, then empty space itself would be what knows. What concern would that have with your mind-entrance?

“Therefore, you should know that the mind-entrance is false and illusory. In its true nature, it is neither of causes and conditions nor of naturalness.”

“Further, Ananda, why is it that the twelve sense-fields are originally the wondrous nature of true suchness from the Treasury of the Tathagata?”

“Ananda, look now at these trees of the Jeta Grove and at the various springs and pools. What do you think? Do these arise because form gives rise to seeing in the eye, or because the eye gives rise to the appearance of form?

“Ananda, if the eye-faculty were to give rise to the appearance of form, then when it sees empty space, which is not form, the nature of form should vanish. And if it vanished, then all things would be brought to nothing. Once the appearance of form were gone, who would then make known the nature of empty space? The same applies to empty space.

“But if the dust of form were to give rise to seeing in the eye, then when one sees empty space, which is not form, seeing

itself should perish. And if it perished, then all would be nothing—who would then make known either empty space or form?

"Therefore, you should know that seeing, together with the emptiness of form, has no fixed place at all. Thus both form and seeing—these two sense-fields—are false and illusory. In their true nature, they are neither of causes and conditions nor of naturalness."

"Ananda, listen further here in the Jeta Grove. When the meal is being served for the Sangha, the drum is struck; when the assembly gathers, the bell is sounded. The sounds of bell and drum continue one after another. What do you think? Is it that the sound comes to the ear, or that the ear goes to the place of the sound?

"Ananda, if the sound came to the ear, then, just as when I go to beg in the city of Sravasti there is no longer any me in the Jeta Grove, so too, if the sound surely came to Ananda's ear, then Maudgalyayana and Kashyapa should not hear it as well. How much less, then, should the one thousand two hundred and fifty shramanas all, upon hearing the bell, come together to the place of the meal?

"But if your ear went to the place of the sound, then, just as when I return and dwell in the Jeta Grove there is no longer any me in the city of Sravasti, so too, when you hear the drum, your ear must already have gone to the place where the drum is struck. Then when the bell sounds at the same time, it

should not be heard as well. How much less, then, the various sounds of elephants, horses, cattle, and sheep?

"And if there were neither coming nor going, then there would likewise be no hearing.

"Therefore, you should know that hearing and sound alike have no fixed place. Thus hearing and sound—these two sense-fields—are false and illusory. In their true nature, they are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Ananda, now smell this sandalwood in the censer. If even a single measure of it is burned, its fragrance is at once perceived throughout approximately the twenty kilometers of Sravasti. What do you think? Does this fragrance arise from the sandalwood? Does it arise from your nose? Or does it arise from empty space?

"Ananda, if this fragrance were produced by your nose, then, since it is said to arise from the nose, it should come forth from the nose. But your nose is not sandalwood—how could there be sandalwood fragrance within it? And if it is said that you smell fragrance, then the fragrance should enter through the nose. If fragrance comes out of the nose, it makes no sense to speak of smelling.

"If it arose from empty space, then since the nature of space is constant, the fragrance should always be there. Why then would one need to burn this dry wood in the censer?

“If it arose from the wood, then the fragrant substance would become smoke when burned. If the nose smells it, then it should have to receive the smoke itself. Yet while the smoke is only beginning to rise and has not gone far, how is it that within twenty kilometers the fragrance is already perceived?

“Therefore, you should know that fragrance, the nose, and smelling alike have no fixed place. Thus, smelling and fragrance—these two sense-fields—are false and illusory. In their true nature, they are neither of causes and conditions nor of naturalness.”

“Ananda, you often carry your bowl among the assembly at the two mealtimes, and among the offerings you may sometimes encounter cream, curds, and ghee, regarded as the finest of flavors. What do you think? Does this flavor arise in empty space? Does it arise in the tongue? Or does it arise in the food?

“Ananda, if this flavor were produced in your tongue, then in your mouth there is only one tongue. At that moment, once your tongue had already become the taste of cream, then when it encountered black stone honey, it should not change. If it did not change, then it could not be called sensing the taste. But if it did change, then the tongue would not have a single body. How could one tongue sense many tastes at the same time?

“If it arose from the food, then food has no consciousness—how could it know itself? And if the food itself has senses,

then that would be the same as another thing that could sense; what would that have to do with your sensing taste?

"If it arose from empty space, then if you ate empty space, what taste would it have? If empty space must necessarily produce a salty taste, then once it salted your tongue, it should also salt your face. Then the people of this world would all be like fish in the sea. And if they were always receiving saltiness, they would no longer know blandness. If they did not know blandness, they would not even perceive saltiness. If nothing at all were known, how could it be called taste?

"Therefore, you should know that taste, the tongue, and tasting alike have no fixed place. Thus, tasting and flavor—these two sense-fields—are both false and illusory. In their true nature, they are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Ananda, when in the morning you often rub your head with your hand, what do you think? In this knowing of the touch, which is the one that touches? Is it in the hand, or is it in the head?

"If it is in the hand, then the head would have no knowing. How then could there be touch? And if it is in the head, then the hand would be of no use. How then could it be called touch?

"If each had its own touch, then you, Ananda, should have two bodies. But if the head and the hand together produce a

single touch, then hand and head should be one substance. And if they were one substance, then touch could not be established. If they were two substances, then where would the touch reside? Where the toucher is, that is not the touched; where the touched is, that is not the toucher. Empty space itself should not be supposed to combine with you to produce touch.

"Therefore, you should know that awareness, touch, and the body alike have no fixed place. Thus, body and touch—these two sense-fields—are both false and illusory. In their true nature, they are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Ananda, among the objects your mind habitually takes hold of are the three qualities of wholesome, unwholesome, and neutral, by which dharmas are formed. What do you think? Do these dharmas arise from the mind itself, or do they exist apart from the mind in some separate location?"

"Ananda, if these dharmas were identical with the mind, then they would not be dust-like objects. And if they were not objects taken by the mind, how could they constitute a sense-field?

"But if, apart from the mind, they had some separate place of their own, then would the nature of these dharmas be knowing or unknowing? If they were knowing, then they would be called mind. In that case, being other than you, they would not be objects; and being the same as another mind,

they would merely be another's measure of mind. But if they were just your own mind, then how could your mind become a second thing in addition to yourself?

"If they were unknowing, then since this object is neither form, sound, smell, taste, separation, contact, cold, warmth, nor even an appearance of empty space, where could it possibly be? Now, in relation to both form and emptiness, there is no way to indicate it. One should not say that, besides what appears in the human world, there is still something outside empty space. If it is not something the mind can take as an object, then from what could a sense-field be established?

"Therefore, you should know that dharmas and mind alike have no fixed place. Thus mind and dharmas—these two sense-fields—are both false and illusory. In their true nature, they are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

"Further, Ananda, why is it that the Eighteen Realms are originally the wondrous nature of true suchness from the Treasury of the Tathagata?"

"Ananda, as you have understood, from eye and form as conditions there arises eye-consciousness. Tell me: is this consciousness produced from the eye, taking the eye as its realm? Or is it produced from form, taking form as its realm?

"Ananda, if it were produced from the eye, then apart from

form and empty space there would be nothing that could be distinguished. Even if your consciousness were there, what use would it have? And your seeing is not itself blue, yellow, red, or white; it has nothing by which it may be indicated. From what, then, could a realm be established?

"But if it were produced from form, then when there is empty space and no form, your consciousness should perish. How then would consciousness know the nature of empty space? And when form changes, you are also aware that the appearance of form is changing. If your consciousness itself does not change, then from what could a realm be established? If it changes along with the form, then the mark of a realm would itself be gone. If it does not change, then it would be fixed and constant. Yet if it is produced from form, how could it fail to know where empty space is?

"And if it were produced from both eye and form together, then when joined there would still be separation within the middle, and when separated there would still be a joining of the two sides. Their substance and nature would be confused and mixed—how could a realm be established?

"Therefore, you should know that the eye-consciousness realm, said to arise from eye and form as conditions, has in truth no place at all in any of the three. Thus eye, form, and the eye-consciousness realm—these three—are originally neither of causes and conditions nor of naturalness."

"Ananda, as you have understood, from ear and sound as

conditions there arises ear-consciousness. Tell me: is this consciousness produced from the ear, taking the ear as its realm? Or is it produced from sound, taking sound as its realm?"

"Ananda, if it were produced from the ear, then when the two appearances of movement and stillness are not present, the faculty could not become knowing, and there would necessarily be nothing known at all. If even knowing cannot be established, what form could consciousness have?

"And if you take hearing to belong to the ear, then without movement and stillness there could be no hearing established. How then could the ear's physical shape—a mixed material form, an object of touch—be called the realm of consciousness? From what, then, could the ear-consciousness realm be established?

"But if it were produced from sound, then consciousness would exist because of sound and would have nothing to do with hearing. Without hearing, the location of sound itself would be lost. If consciousness were produced from sound, then, granted that sound-appearance exists because of hearing, hearing should also hear consciousness. If it does not hear, then it is not a realm. If it does hear, then hearing would become the same as sound. Once consciousness had already been heard, who would then know the hearing-consciousness? And if there were no knower at all, it would finally be no different from grass or wood. Nor should sound and hearing together be confused into making some intermediate realm.

“If there is no middle position for a realm, then from what could the inner and outer aspects again be established?

“Therefore, you should know that the ear-consciousness realm, said to arise from ear and sound as conditions, has in truth no place at all in any of the three. Thus ear, sound, and the ear-consciousness realm—these three—are originally neither of causes and conditions nor of naturalness.”

“Ananda, as you have understood, from nose and fragrance as conditions there arises nose-consciousness. Tell me: is this consciousness produced from the nose, taking the nose as its realm? Or is it produced from fragrance, taking fragrance as its realm?”

“Ananda, if it were produced from the nose, then what in your mind do you take to be the nose? Do you take the fleshy shape with its two claws? Or do you take the knowing nature of smelling, which moves and stirs?

“If you take the fleshy shape, that flesh is simply part of the body. The body’s knowing is touch. If it is called body, it is not called nose; and if it is called touch, then it is already an external object. The nose itself would not even have a name—how then could a realm be established?

“But if you take the knowing of smell, then what in your mind do you take to be the knower? If you say the flesh knows, then the knowing of the flesh is originally touch, not the nose. If you say empty space knows, then empty space

would itself be the knower, and the flesh should have no awareness. In that case, empty space would be you, and your body would be without knowing. Then today Ananda himself should not even be here.

"If you say fragrance is the knower, then knowing would belong to fragrance itself—what would that have to do with you? And if the streams of fragrance and foul odors must necessarily arise in your nose, then those two streams of odor should not come from the ylang plant or from sandalwood. But if those two things do not come, then when you smell your own nose, is it fragrant or foul? If foul, then it is not fragrant; if fragrant, then it is not foul. And if both fragrance and foulness could both be smelled, then you, one person, should have two noses. Standing before me and asking the Dharma, there would be two Anandas—which one would be your true self?

"But if the nose is one, then fragrance and foulness cannot both be ultimate realities. If foulness becomes fragrance, and fragrance becomes foulness, then neither of the two natures could stand. From what, then, could a realm be established?

"And if it were produced from fragrance, then consciousness would exist because of fragrance. This would be like the eye, which has seeing but cannot see itself. Because it exists through fragrance, it should not be able to know fragrance. If it knows, then it is not produced from fragrance. If it does not know, then it is not consciousness. Since fragrance is not something that knows, the realm of fragrance cannot be

established. And if consciousness does not know fragrance, then the realm cannot be said to be established from fragrance.

“Once there is no middle term, inner and outer also cannot be established. All such smelling-consciousness is ultimately empty and false.

“Therefore, you should know that the nose-consciousness realm, said to arise from nose and fragrance as conditions, has in truth no place at all in any of the three. Thus nose, fragrance, and the nose-consciousness realm—these three—are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity.”

“Ananda, as you have understood, from tongue and flavor as conditions there arises tongue-consciousness. Tell me: is this consciousness produced from the tongue, taking the tongue as its realm? Or is it produced from flavor, taking flavor as its realm?”

“Ananda, if it were produced from the tongue, then all the sweet cane, black plums, coptis, rock salt, asarum, ginger, and cassia in the world would have no flavor at all. Then when you yourself taste your tongue, would it be sweet or bitter? If the nature of the tongue were bitter, who would come to taste the tongue? The tongue does not taste itself—who then would be the knower? And if the nature of the tongue were not bitter, then flavor would not arise from it at all. How, then, could a realm be established?

“But if it were produced from flavor, then consciousness itself would be flavor. Being the same as the tongue-faculty, it should not be able to taste itself. How then would consciousness know whether something is flavor or not? And all flavors do not arise from a single thing. Since flavors arise in many ways, consciousness too should have many bodies. But if the body of consciousness were one, and that one body must be produced by flavor, then salt, blandness, sweetness, pungency, and all the various mixed and changing appearances would all become a single flavor, and there should be no discrimination among them.

“If there were no discrimination, it could not be called consciousness. How then could it again be called the realm of tongue, flavor, and consciousness? Nor should empty space be said to produce your mind-consciousness. And if tongue and flavor joined together, then within that joining there would originally be no intrinsic nature at all. How, then, could a realm arise?

“Therefore, you should know that the tongue-consciousness realm, said to arise from tongue and flavor as conditions, has in truth no place at all in any of the three. Thus tongue, flavor, and the tongue-consciousness realm—these three—are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity.”

“Ananda, as you have understood, from body and touch as conditions there arises body-consciousness. Tell me: is this consciousness produced from the body, taking the body as

its realm? Or is it produced from touch, taking touch as its realm?"

"Ananda, if it were produced from the body, then apart from the two conditions of contact and separation there would be no occasion for awareness at all—what, then, could the body know? And if it were produced from touch, then apart from your body, who would there be that, though not body, could know contact and separation?

"Ananda, things do not know touch; the body knows that there is touch. To know the body is already touch; to know touch is already body. If it is just touch, it is not body; if it is just body, it is not touch. The two appearances of body and touch originally have no fixed place.

"If contact with the body were simply the body's own nature, then separation from the body would be no different from empty space. Inner and outer would both fail to stand—how then could a middle be established? And if the middle cannot be established, then the inner and outer are empty of any fixed nature. From what, then, could your consciousness arise so as to establish a realm?

"Therefore, you should know that the body-consciousness realm, said to arise from body and touch as conditions, has in truth no place at all in any of the three. Thus body, touch, and the body-consciousness realm—these three—are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

“Ananda, as you have understood, from mind and dharmas as conditions there arises mind-consciousness. Tell me: is this consciousness produced from the mind, taking the mind as its realm? Or is it produced from dharmas, taking dharmas as its realm?”

“Ananda, if it were produced from the mind-faculty, then within your mind there must first be something thought of, in order to make your mind manifest. If there were no dharma before it, then the mind would have nothing from which to arise. Apart from conditions, it has no form—what, then, could consciousness be used for?

“Further, this mind of consciousness in you, together with all thinking and measuring, and together with the nature that discriminates and knows—are these the same as the mind, or are they different from it? If they are the same as the mind, then they are already the mind—how could they be said to be produced? If they are different from the mind, then they should be without anything known. And if there were nothing known, how could they arise from the mind? But if there is something known, how can consciousness know the mind itself? Since neither sameness nor difference can be established, how could a realm be set up?

“But if it were produced from dharmas, then all dharmas in the world do not go beyond the five dusts. Look at forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches: their appearances are clear and definite, each corresponding to one of the five faculties, and none belongs to the domain of mind alone.

"If you insist that your consciousness is definitely produced from dharmas, then look carefully—what shape do these dharmas have? Apart from form and emptiness, movement and stillness, openness and obstruction, contact and separation, arising and ceasing, beyond all these appearances, in the end nothing can be found. When there is arising, forms, emptiness, and the rest all arise together. When there is ceasing, forms, emptiness, and the rest all cease together. If what it depends on is already absent, then what appearance could a consciousness produced from that dependence possibly have? And if no appearance can be found, how could a realm arise?

"Therefore, you should know that the mind-consciousness realm, said to arise from mind and dharmas as conditions, has in truth no place at all in any of the three. Thus mind, dharmas, and the mind-consciousness realm—these three—are neither produced through causes and conditions nor endowed with a nature of spontaneity."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, the Tathagata has often taught that coordination of causes and conditions account for the many transformations in the world, all being brought forth through the combination of the Four Great Elements. Why, then, does the Tathagata now reject both causes and conditions and naturalness alike?

"I now do not understand where the meaning of this belongs. I only pray that the World-Honored One, in compassion, will open and reveal to living beings the Middle Way—the

complete and ultimate teaching, the Dharma free of idle speculation."

At that time the World-Honored One said to Ānanda:

"You had already grown weary of and turned away from the lesser teachings of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, and brought forth the resolve to seek unsurpassed Bodhi. Therefore, I now reveal to you the truth of the highest meaning. Why do you again take up worldly idle discourse and delusive notions of causation, and bind yourself with them?

Though you have heard many teachings, you are like a person who can speak of medicines, yet when the true medicine is set before him, cannot distinguish it. The Thus Come One says that such a one is indeed to be pitied.

Now listen carefully. I shall explain and distinguish this for you in detail and also enable those in the future who cultivate the Great Vehicle to penetrate the true reality."

Ānanda fell silent and received the Buddha's sacred instruction.

Ānanda, as you have said, the four great elements combine and thereby bring forth all the various transformations of the world.

Ānanda, if the essential nature of those great elements were

not itself of combination, then they could not intermingle with the other elements—just as empty space does not mingle with the various forms.

But if they were truly combined, then they would be no different from things subject to change: beginning and end would mutually succeed one another, arising and ceasing would continue in unbroken sequence—birth after death, death after birth, birth after birth, death after death—like a whirling firebrand that never comes to rest.

Ānanda, it is like water becoming ice, and ice again becoming water.

Look at earth: in its coarse aspect it is the great earth; in its subtle aspect it is minute dust. Reaching the dust nearest to emptiness, if one analyzes that ultimate boundary of form, it is composed of seven parts. If one further analyzes that dust nearest to emptiness, it then becomes the very nature of emptiness.

Ānanda, if this dust nearest to emptiness can be analyzed until it becomes empty space, then you should know that empty space gives rise to the appearances of form.

You now ask, "Because of combination, do all the various changing appearances of the world come forth?"

Then just observe this single mote of dust nearest to emptiness: by how much empty space is it combined so as to

exist? It cannot be that dust nearest to emptiness combines in order to become dust nearest to emptiness.

And when that mote of dust nearest to emptiness is analyzed until it enters emptiness, by how many appearances of form is empty space combined so as to be made?

If form combines, then what is combined is form and not emptiness.

If emptiness combines, then what is combined is emptiness and not form.

Form can still be analyzed, but how can emptiness be combined?

You have never understood that within the Tathāgata-garbha, the nature of form is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true form. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma-realm. It accords with the minds of living beings, responding according to the measure of their knowing, and manifests in accordance with karma.

Worldly people do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions, or as naturalness. All of this is merely the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is only verbal expression and has no real meaning at all.

“Ananda, the nature of fire has no self of its own; it depends

upon various conditions. Look at the households in the city that have not yet prepared their meal: when they wish to cook, they each hold a sun-mirror in hand and seek fire before the sun.

“Ananda, what is called combination is like the one thousand two hundred and fifty bhikshus who, together with you and me, now make up a single assembly. Though the assembly is one, if we inquire into its source, each person has his own body, and each has his own family and name: Sariputra of the Brahmin lineage, Uruvilva-Kasyapa of the Kasyapa lineage, and even Ananda of the Gautama clan.

“Ananda, if this nature of fire exists because of combination, then when one holds the mirror in the hand and seeks fire before the sun, does this fire come out from the mirror? Does it come from the mugwort? Or does it come from the sun?

“Ananda, if it came from the sun, then it should itself burn the mugwort in your hand, and the trees and woods along the path from which it came should all be set ablaze. If it came from the mirror, then it should first come forth from the mirror and set fire to the mugwort. Why then does the mirror not melt? Your bent hand that holds it has not even the sign of heat—how then could it liquefy? And if it came from the mugwort, why would it need the light of sun and mirror to meet before fire appears?

“Look carefully again: the mirror is held in the hand, the sun comes from the sky, the mugwort grows from the earth. From

what direction does the fire come wandering here? The sun and the mirror are far apart—neither joined nor combined. It should not be that the flame exists by itself without any source.

"You still do not understand that within the Treasury of the Tathagata, the nature of fire is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true fire. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma-realm. It accords with the minds of living beings and responds according to the measure of their knowing.

"Ananda, you should know that when people of the world hold up a mirror in one place, fire appears in one place. Yet if throughout the Dharma-realm mirrors were held up, then throughout the world fire would arise; and if it arose throughout the world, how could it have any fixed location? In accordance with karma, it manifests.

"The people of the world do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions or as naturalness. All of this is only the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is merely verbal expression and has no real meaning at all."

"Ananda, the nature of water is not fixed; its flowing and resting are not constant. In the city of Sravasti there are Kapila ascetics, Cakra ascetics, Padma great magicians, and other such masters of illusion, who seek the essence of the moon to mix with their magical medicines. On nights when the moon is bright as day, these masters hold a pearl vessel in

their hands and receive water from the moon.

“Tell me, does this water come forth from the pearl? Does it arise from empty space? Or does it come from the moon?

“Ananda, if it came from the moon, then since from afar it can cause water to issue from the pearl, all the trees and woods along its path should also pour forth streams. And if they do not pour forth streams, that shows the water does not descend from the moon.

“If it came from the pearl, then the pearl itself should always be flowing with water. Why would one have to wait for the middle of the night when the moon is bright as day?

“If it came from empty space, then since the nature of space is boundless, the water too should be without limit. From men up to the heavens, all would be drowned alike. How then could there still be beings that move on water, on land, and in the air?

“Look again carefully: the moon rises in the sky; the pearl is held in the hand; the basin that receives the pearl-water is laid out by a person. From what direction does this water flow and pour into this place? The moon and the pearl are far apart—neither joined nor combined. It should not be that the watery essence exists of itself without any source.

“You still do not understand that within the Treasury of the Tathagata, the nature of water is true emptiness, and

the nature of emptiness is true water. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma-realm. It accords with the minds of living beings and responds according to the measure of their knowing.

"When in one place a pearl is held, in one place water appears. If throughout the Dharma-realm pearls were held, then throughout the Dharma-realm water would arise, filling the whole world. How could it have any fixed location? In accordance with karma, it manifests.

"The people of the world do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions or as naturalness. All of this is only the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is merely verbal expression and has no real meaning at all."

"Ananda, the nature of wind has no fixed substance; movement and stillness are not constant. When you arrange your robe and enter the great assembly, the corner of your sanghati may stir and touch the person beside you, and then a slight breeze brushes that person's face. Does this wind come from the corner of the robe? Does it arise from empty space? Or is it produced from that person's face?

"Ananda, if this wind came from the corner of the robe, then you would be wearing the wind itself. If the robe is shaken, it should leave your body. Here and now, while I am speaking in the assembly, my robe hangs down—look and see, where is the wind in my robe? One should not say that there is in the

robe some hidden place where wind is stored.

“If it arose from empty space, then when your robe is not moving, why is there no brushing breeze? Since the nature of space is constant, wind too should always arise. And if, when there is no wind, empty space was to perish, then the disappearance of wind might be seen—but what would the disappearance of empty space be like? If it has arising and ceasing, then it is not called empty space. If it is indeed called empty space, how can wind arise from it?

“If the wind were produced from the face that is brushed, then it should turn around and brush you. Since it is you who arrange your robe, why does it instead brush the other person?

“Examine this carefully: it is you who adjust the robe; the face belongs to the other person; empty space remains still and does not join in movement. From what direction, then, does the wind come blowing here? Wind and space differ in nature; they are neither mixed nor combined. One should not say that the nature of wind exists by itself without any source.

“You still do not know that within the Treasury of the Tathagata, the nature of wind is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true wind. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma-realm. It accords with the minds of living beings and responds according to the measure of their knowing.

“Ananda, just as in your case a slight movement of your robe

gives rise to a slight breeze, so too throughout the Dharma-realm, when causes are set in motion, wind may arise throughout worlds and fill all lands. If it pervades the world, how could it have any fixed place? In accordance with karma, it manifests.

"The people of the world do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions or as naturalness. All of this is only the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is merely verbal expression and has no real meaning at all."

Ānanda, the nature of emptiness has no form. It is only made manifest because of form.

Take, for example, those in the city of Śrāvastī who dwell far from the river—kṣatriyas, brahmins, vaiśyas, śūdras, and also bhāradvājas, caṇḍālas, and the like - who, having newly settled in a place, dig wells in search of water. When they remove one foot of earth, there is within it one foot of empty space. Thus, if they remove ten feet of earth, there is ten feet of empty space within it. The shallowness or depth of the empty space accords with the amount that has been dug out.

Now, does this empty space come forth because of the earth?

Does it exist because of the digging?

Or does it arise of itself, without cause?

Ānanda, if this emptiness were born of itself without cause, then before the earth was dug, why was there no unobstructed openness? One saw only the great earth, with no passage through it.

If it came forth from the earth, then when the earth came out, one should also see emptiness entering in. But if the earth comes out first without emptiness entering, then how can emptiness be said to come from the earth?

If there is no coming out and no entering in, then emptiness and earth should originally have no different cause. If they were not different, they would be the same. But if they were the same, then when the earth came out, why did emptiness not also come out?

If emptiness came from the digging, then the digging should bring out emptiness and not earth. But if it does not come from the digging, and the digging only brings out earth, how then is emptiness seen?

Examine this carefully, carefully and truly observe:

the digging comes from the movement of human hands, according to direction;

the earth is displaced from the ground.

From what, then, does this emptiness come forth?

Digging and emptiness, the solid and the void, do not function as one another. They are neither mixed nor joined. It should not be said that emptiness comes forth on its own without any source.

If this emptiness is by nature perfectly complete, all-pervading, and fundamentally unmoving, then you should know that the earth, water, fire, and wind now before you, together with emptiness, are all called the five great elements. Their nature is truly perfect and interpenetrating. All are the Tathāgata-garbha, originally without arising or ceasing.

Ānanda, your mind is darkened and confused, and you do not realize that the four great elements are originally the Tathāgata-garbha. You should observe emptiness itself:

Does it come out?

Does it enter in?

Or is it neither coming out nor entering in?

You do not at all know that within the Tathāgata-garbha, the nature of awareness is true emptiness, and the nature of emptiness is true awareness. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma-realm, responding to the minds of living beings according to the measure of their knowing.

Ānanda, just as the emptiness in one well appears as the space of one well, so too the emptiness of the ten directions is

likewise so. It perfectly fills the ten directions - how could it have any fixed location? It manifests according to karma.

Worldly people do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions or as naturalness. All of this is merely the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is only verbal expression and has no real meaning at all.

“Ananda, the awareness of seeing has no knowing of its own but is made manifest because of form and emptiness. Just as now in the Jeta Grove there is brightness in the morning and darkness in the evening; in the middle of the night, when the moon is bright there is light, and when the moon is dark there is darkness. Thus brightness, darkness, and the like are distinguished because of seeing. Tell me: is this seeing one and the same substance as brightness, darkness, and empty space? Is it not one substance? Is it the same and not the same at once? Or is it different and not different?

“Ananda, if this seeing were originally one substance with brightness, darkness, and empty space, then brightness and darkness—the two—would destroy one another. In darkness there is no brightness; in brightness there is no darkness. If it were one with darkness, then when brightness appears, seeing should perish. If it were one with brightness, then when darkness comes, seeing should perish. If it perished, how could it see brightness and see darkness? And if brightness and darkness are distinct, while seeing neither arises nor ceases, how could it be called one?

"But if this pure seeing were not one substance with brightness, darkness, and empty space, then, setting brightness, darkness, and empty space aside, what form would the source of seeing have if you analyzed it? Apart from brightness, apart from darkness, and apart from empty space, the source of seeing would be like the hair of a tortoise or the horn of a rabbit. If brightness, darkness, and empty space were all different from it, then from what could seeing be established? Since brightness and darkness are opposed to each other, how could one say it is both same and not same? And if apart from those three nothing remains, how could one say it is different? When you distinguish space from seeing, there is originally no boundary between them— how can one say they are not the same? Yet the nature that sees darkness and sees brightness does not change—how can one say it is not different?

"You should examine this repeatedly, with utmost care: brightness comes from the sun; darkness follows the dark moon; openness belongs to empty space; obstruction returns to the great earth. From what, then, does this pure seeing arise? Seeing-awareness and empty dullness are neither mixed nor joined. One should not say that the seeing-essence arises of itself without any source.

"If seeing, hearing, and knowing are in their nature perfectly complete, all-pervading, and fundamentally unmoving, then you should know that the boundless and unmoving empty space, together with the moving earth, water, fire, and wind, are all together called the six great elements. Their natures

are truly perfectly fused, all are the Treasury of the Tathagata, and are originally without arising or ceasing.

"Ananda, your nature is sunk in confusion, and you do not awaken to the fact that your seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing are originally the Treasury of the Tathagata. You should now observe whether this seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing arise or cease, are the same or different, or are neither arising and ceasing nor sameness and difference.

"You have never known that within the Treasury of the Tathagata, the nature of seeing is true awakened brightness, and awakened essence is true bright seeing. Pure in its origin, it pervades the Dharma-realm and accords with the minds of living beings, responding according to the measure of their knowing. Just as one faculty of seeing may behold throughout the Dharma-realm, so hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, awareness of touch, and knowing are all wondrously clear and radiant, pervading the Dharma-realm and filling the ten directions. How could they have any fixed location? In accordance with karma, they manifest.

"The people of the world do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions or as naturalness. All of this is only the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is merely verbal expression and has no real meaning at all."

"Ananda, the nature of consciousness has no source of its own. It falsely arises because of the six kinds of faculties

and sense-objects. Now look all around at the holy assembly gathered here. You use your eyes to survey them one by one; your eyes merely look over them, like a mirror, without separate analysis. But within that, your consciousness successively points them out and knows: 'This is Manjushri; this is Purna; this is Maudgalyayana; this is Subhuti; this is Sariputra.'

"This discriminating consciousness—does it arise from seeing? Does it arise from appearances? Does it arise from empty space? Or does it suddenly appear without any cause at all?

"Ananda, if your consciousness arose from seeing, then when there is no brightness, no darkness, no form, and no empty space, your seeing itself would not exist. If seeing itself does not exist, then from what could consciousness arise?

"If your consciousness arose from appearances, and not from seeing, then if it did not see brightness and did not see darkness, then it would not perceive brightness or darkness, and there would be no form or empty space. If those appearances themselves were absent, then from what could consciousness arise?

"If it arose from empty space, then, since it would be neither appearance nor seeing, it would be unable, without seeing, to distinguish brightness, darkness, form, or empty space; and without appearances, the conditions of seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing would have no place to stand.

Remaining in this state of being neither of the two, empty space would not be the same as nothing, and existence would not be the same as things. Even if your consciousness did arise, what would it discriminate?

"And if it suddenly appeared without any cause, then why does it not, in broad daylight, separately recognize the moon?

"You should examine this again and again with utmost care: seeing depends upon your eyes; appearances are presented by the objects before you; what can be given shape becomes 'existent'; what cannot becomes 'non-existent.' From what, then, does this consciousness-condition arise? Consciousness is active while seeing is still; they are neither mixed nor joined. Hearing, awareness, and knowing are likewise so. One should not say that the condition of consciousness arises of itself without any source.

"If this conscious mind truly has no place from which it comes, then you should know that the discriminating awareness of seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing is perfectly full and still, its nature not derived from anything else. Together with empty space, earth, water, fire, and wind, these are all called the seven great elements. Their natures are truly perfectly fused, all are the Treasury of the Tathagata, and are originally without arising or ceasing.

"Ananda, your mind is coarse and shallow, and you do not awaken to the fact that seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing, and the discerning clarity they manifest,

are originally the Treasury of the Tathagata. You should observe this conscious mind at the six places: is it the same, or different? Is it empty, or existent? Is it neither same nor different? Is it neither empty nor existent?

"You have never known that within the Treasury of the Tathagata, the nature of consciousness is bright knowing, and awakened brightness is true consciousness. Wondrously awakened and deeply still, it pervades the Dharma-realm, containing and disclosing the ten directions—how could it have any fixed location? In accordance with karma, it manifests.

"The people of the world do not understand this. They are deluded into taking it as causes and conditions or as naturalness. All of this is only the discriminating calculation of the conscious mind. It is merely verbal expression and has no real meaning at all."

At that time, Ānanda and the whole great assembly, receiving the Tathāgata's subtle and wondrous instruction, felt their bodies and minds become wholly open and unbound, free from all obstruction.

Each of them then knew for himself that the mind pervades the ten directions. They beheld the empty space of the ten directions as plainly as one looks at a leaf held in the palm of the hand. All things whatsoever in the world were seen to be none other than Bodhi itself—the wondrous, luminous, original mind. The essence of that mind is perfectly complete

and all-pervading, containing the ten directions within itself.

Turning back to look upon the body born of father and mother, they saw it as though it were but a single mote of dust blown about in the vast empty space of the ten directions, seeming now to exist, now to vanish; or like a single bubble floating upon a great, clear sea, arising and perishing without any fixed source.

Thus, they clearly knew for themselves that they had recovered the original wondrous mind, ever-abiding and undying.

They bowed to the Buddha with palms joined, attained what they had never known before, and before the Thus Come One spoke verses in praise of the Buddha:

Verses of Praise and Vow

O Wondrously Still, All-Sustaining, Unmoving Honored One,

O King Śūraṅgama, rare throughout the worlds,

You have shattered my inverted thoughts accumulated through countless kalpas;

Without passing through asaṃkhyeya aeons, I have realized the Dharma-body.

May I now attain the fruition and become a Precious King,

Returning to ferry living beings as countless as the sands of the Ganges.

With this profound resolve I dedicate myself to lands as numerous as dust-motes;

This indeed is called repaying the Buddha's grace.

I humbly beseech the World-Honored One to bear witness for me:

Into the evil age of the five turbidities I vow to enter first.

So long as even a single being has not yet become a Buddha,

I shall never seek Nirvāṇa for myself alone.

O Great Hero, mighty in power and vast in compassion,

I pray that you further examine and eradicate my subtlest delusions.

Cause me swiftly to realize unsurpassed awakening,

And throughout the worlds of the ten directions sit upon the bodhimaṇḍa.

Though the very nature of emptiness itself should perish and be exhausted,

My vajra-like resolve shall never waver or retreat.

IV

At that time Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, in the midst of the great assembly, rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, joined his palms respectfully, and said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One of great majestic virtue, you have skillfully expounded for living beings the Thus Come One's truth of the highest meaning. The World-Honored One has often praised me as foremost among those who expounded the Dharma. Yet now, on hearing the Thus Come One's subtle and wondrous Dharma-voice, I am like a deaf man listening to a mosquito from more than a hundred paces away: what I could not even see in the first place, how much less could I truly hear?

"Although the Buddha has spoken clearly and enabled me to cast off confusion, I still have not yet understood how this meaning reaches the final ground free from doubt. World-Honored One, men such as Ānanda, though they have awakened, have not yet removed their residual outflows. But those of us in this assembly who have attained the state beyond outflows, though we have exhausted the outflows, still, on hearing the Dharma-sound spoken by the Thus Come One, remain with lingering doubt and perplexity.

"World-Honored One, if all the faculties and objects, the skandhas, the sense-fields, and the realms in the world are

all the Thus Come One's treasury, pure and originally so, then how do the mountains, rivers, and great earth, all these conditioned appearances, suddenly arise, passing in sequence, flowing and changing, ending and beginning again?

"And the Thus Come One has said that earth, water, fire, and wind are in their original nature perfectly interfused, pervading the Dharma-realm, serene and ever-abiding. World-Honored One, if the nature of earth is all-pervasive, how can it contain water? If the nature of water is all-pervasive, then fire should not arise. And how is it that the natures of water and fire can both pervade empty space without encroaching upon and destroying one another?

"World-Honored One, the nature of earth is obstructive, while the nature of space is open and unobstructed. How can both alike pervade the Dharma-realm? I do not know where the meaning of this lies. I only pray that the Thus Come One will pour forth great compassion, dispel the clouds of my confusion, and those of the whole assembly as well."

Having spoken thus, he prostrated himself with all five parts of his body to the ground, reverently longing for the Thus Come One's unsurpassed compassionate instruction.

At that time, the World-Honored One said to Purna and to all the Arhats in the assembly who had exhausted the outflows and were beyond learning:

"Today the Tathagata will, for this whole assembly, proclaim

the true nature of the supreme truth within the supreme meaning. Thus those among you who are fixed in the Hearer path, together with all those Arhats who have not yet attained the emptiness of both self and dharmas but have turned back toward the higher vehicle, may all obtain the one vehicle's ground of quiescent extinction, the true aranya, the proper place of cultivation."

"Now listen carefully. I shall explain it for you."

Purna and the others, reverently receiving the Buddha's Dharma-voice, fell silent and listened.

The Buddha said:

"Pūrṇa, as you have said, 'If all is pure and originally so, how do mountains, rivers, and the great earth suddenly arise?' Have you not often heard the Thus Come One declare that the nature of awakening is wondrously bright, and that original awakening is bright in its very wonder?"

Pūrṇa said, "Yes, World-Honored One. I have often heard the Buddha proclaim this meaning."

The Buddha said, "When you speak of awakened brightness, do you mean that the nature itself is bright, and therefore it is called awakening? Or do you mean that awakening in itself is not bright, and only when brightness is added is it called awakened brightness?"

Pūrṇa said, “If that which is not bright were called awakening, then there would be nothing that could be made bright.”

The Buddha said: "If there is no object to be illumined, there is no illumining awareness. An object of awareness is not true awareness; without an object, there is no true illumination. Nescience (ignorance) is fundamentally not the serene and bright nature of awareness.

The nature of awareness is inherently illuminating. Yet, it falsely gives rise to an objectified awareness.

Awareness is not an object to be illumined. However, by introducing illumination, an objective realm is established. Once the objective realm is falsely established, your false subjective capacity arises.

Within that which is neither identical nor different, difference blazes forth. Differentiating that which is different from itself, identity is established based on that difference. As identity and difference illuminate each other, they further give rise to that which is neither identical nor different.

Such turbulence and mutual dependence generate weariness. Protracted weariness manifests as defilement, causing self-generated turbidity. This triggers the defilements of vexation.

Arising activity becomes the world. Stillness becomes empty space. Empty space represents identity. The world represents difference. That which is neither identical nor different

constitutes the true conditioned phenomena (saṃskṛta dharmas)."

Awakened brightness and dark emptiness, depending on one another, produce movement. Therefore, there is the wheel of wind which holds the world in place.

Because of emptiness, movement arises; because of solid brightness, obstruction is established. What is called gold and precious substance is awakened brightness becoming fixed and hard. Therefore, there is the wheel of metal which upholds the lands.

When solid awareness turns into treasure, and moving brightness gives rise to wind, wind and metal rubbing together produce the light of fire, whose nature is transformation.

The brightness of treasure gives rise to moisture, and the light of fire rises upward in steaming. Therefore, there is the wheel of water containing the worlds of the ten directions.

Fire rises and water descends. Their interaction establishes solidity. What is wet becomes the great oceans; what is dry becomes the continents and islands.

For this reason, in the great oceans firelight is ever arising, and on the continents and islands rivers and streams are ever flowing.

When the force of water is less than that of fire, it congeals

into high mountains. Therefore, when mountain stone is struck, it gives forth flame; when melted, it turns into water.

When the force of earth is less than that of water, it is drawn out into grasses and trees. Therefore, forests and groves, when burned, become earth; when twisted or pressed, they yield water.

These mutual delusions give rise to one another, each becoming the seed of the other. By these causes and conditions, the world continues in succession.

"Further, Purna, this deluded brightness does not come from anything else—the fault lies in trying to make awareness into brightness. Once what is false is established, the principle of true brightness can no longer go beyond it.

"For this reason, hearing does not go beyond sound, and seeing does not go beyond form. Form, smell, taste, and touch—the six false objects—are thereby established. From this there is divided out seeing, awareness, hearing, and knowing. Beings of shared karma become entangled together; through union and separation transformations take place.

"When seeing encounters brightness, form is brought forth. When bright seeing joins with thought, ideation is formed. Difference in what is seen becomes aversion; sameness in thought becomes love. Flowing love becomes the seed, and receiving thought becomes the womb. From sexual union, life is generated, drawing in beings of like karma. Thus, there

arise, through causes and conditions, kalalas, arbudas, and the other embryonic stages.

"Birth as womb-born, egg-born, moisture-born, or karma-born (upapāduka) occurs according to what is appropriate. Egg-born beings arise through thought alone. Womb-born beings arise through emotion. Moisture-born beings respond through union. Karma-born beings respond through separation. Emotion, thought, union, and separation continually interchange and transform. The karma that beings receive follows them according to whether they rise or sink. By these causes and conditions, the continuity of living beings comes about."

Pūrṇa, when thought and love bind together, and love cannot be parted from, then throughout the world fathers, mothers, children, and grandchildren are born one after another without end. All this takes desire and craving as its root.

When greed and love nourish one another, and greed cannot be brought to an end, then throughout the world sentient beings born from eggs, karma, moisture, and wombs devour one another according to the strength or weakness of their power. All this takes the greed of killing as its root.

Thus, men eat sheep, and sheep, when dead, become men; men, when dead, become sheep. Thus, it is for up to **ten categories of living beings**: in death after death, birth after birth, they come and go, devouring one another. Evil karma is born along with them and continues to the end of the future.

All this takes the greed of stealing as its root.

You owe me a life, and I repay your debt. Because of this cause and condition, for hundreds of thousands of kalpas beings remain in the cycle of birth and death. You are attracted to my mind, and I am attached to your form. Because of this cause and condition, for hundreds of thousands of kalpas beings remain in bondage.

It is only killing, stealing, and lust that are the fundamental karmic roots. Because of these, karmic cause and karmic result continue one after another.

Pūrṇa, these three kinds of inverted continuity all arise from awakened brightness, from the knowing nature that understands and illumines. Because of that illusory illumination, appearances are brought forth, and from false seeing they are born.

Mountains, rivers, and the great earth, together with all conditioned appearances, proceed in sequence, flowing and changing. Because of this delusion, they end and begin again without cease.

Pūrṇa said:

“If this wondrous awakening, this originally wondrous awakened brightness, neither increases nor decreases in relation to the Tathāgata’s mind, then how is it that mountains, rivers, and the great earth, all these conditioned

appearances, arise all at once without any real basis? And now that the Thus Come One has attained this wondrous empty and luminous awakening, when shall the conditioned habits and outflows of mountains, rivers, and the great earth arise again?"

The Buddha said to Pūrṇa:

"It is like a deluded man who, in a certain village, mistakes south for north. Does this delusion arise because of delusion itself, or does it arise from awakening?"

Pūrṇa said:

"Such a deluded man is not deluded because of delusion, nor because of awakening. Why? Delusion itself has no root; how could it arise from delusion? And awakening does not produce delusion; how could it arise from awakening?"

The Buddha said:

"When that deluded man is in the very midst of his confusion, suppose that suddenly there is a person of understanding who points it out and enables him to awaken. Pūrṇa, what do you think? Though that man had been deluded, in that same village would he again give rise to delusion?"

"No, World-Honored One."

"Pūrṇa, so it is also with the Thus Come Ones of the ten

directions. This delusion has no root; its nature is ultimately empty. From the beginning there was no delusion. It only seemed as though there were delusion and awakening. When awakening illumines delusion, delusion is extinguished; awakening does not give rise to delusion.

"It is also like a man with diseased eyes who sees flowers in empty space. If the disease of the eyes is cured, the flowers vanish from empty space. Suppose there were a foolish man who, in that very place in empty space where those flowers had vanished, waited for the flowers to appear again. Tell me, would you call such a man foolish or wise?"

Pūrṇa said:

"Empty space originally has no flowers. Their arising and vanishing are only products of false seeing. To observe that the flowers have perished from empty space is already delusion. To insist that they should appear again is truly madness and delusion. How could such a madman be called either foolish or wise?"

The Buddha said:

"As you yourself have understood, why then do you ask, 'When will the wondrous awakened luminous emptiness of the Thus Come Ones again give rise to mountains, rivers, and the great earth?'

"It is also like gold ore mixed with pure gold: once the gold

is refined to purity, it never again becomes mixed. It is like wood reduced to ashes: it does not become wood again. So it is with the Bodhi and Nirvāṇa of the Thus Come Ones."

Pūrṇa, you also asked this: if earth, water, fire, and wind are in their original nature perfectly interfused and pervade the Dharma-realm, why do the natures of water and fire not destroy one another? And again, you asked how empty space and the great earth, both pervading the Dharma-realm, can fail to contain one another.

Pūrṇa, take empty space as an example. Its substance is not the various appearances, and yet it does not prevent those appearances from being manifested.

Why is this so?

Pūrṇa, in that great empty space, when the sun shines there is brightness; when clouds gather there is darkness; when wind stirs there is movement; when the sky clears there is purity; when vapors condense there is turbidity; when dust accumulates there is haze; and when water settles there is reflection.

What do you think? Do such differing conditioned appearances arise from those things themselves, or do they arise from empty space?

If they arose from those things, then, Pūrṇa, when the sun shines and there is brightness, the worlds of the ten directions

should all become the color of the sun. Why then is the round sun still seen separately within space?

But if that brightness belonged to empty space, then space itself should shine. Why then, in the middle of the night when clouds and mists are thick, does no radiance appear?

You should know, then, that this brightness is neither from the sun nor from space, yet neither is it apart from sun and space.

To regard these appearances as real is itself delusion; there is nothing there that can be fixed and pointed out. It is like trying to gather flowers in empty space and make from them a fruit of empty space. How, then, can one go on questioning whether such appearances do or do not encroach upon and destroy one another?

But when one contemplates their nature, that nature is originally true, and is only the wondrous awakened brightness. The wondrous awakened bright mind is in the first place neither water nor fire. Why then ask whether they can or cannot contain one another?

The true, wondrous awakened brightness is likewise so.

When you make emptiness manifest, emptiness appears.

When earth, water, fire, and wind are each made manifest, each appears.

If all are made manifest together, then all appear together.

How do they appear together?

Pūrṇa, it is like the reflection of the sun appearing in a single body of water. Two people at once look at the sun reflected in that water, and then one goes east while the other goes west. Each sees a sun following him. One goes east, one goes west, yet from the beginning there is no fixed point. One should not object, "The sun is one - how can it go with each of them?" Nor should one object, "If each has a sun, how can there be only one reflected sun?" Such turnings of thought are empty and false, with nothing that can be relied upon.

Pūrṇa, you take form and emptiness as though they pressed against and displaced one another within the Tathāgata-garbha. Yet the Tathāgata-garbha accordingly becomes form and emptiness, pervading the Dharma-realm. Therefore, within it there is wind in motion, emptiness in clarity, the sun in brightness, and clouds in darkness. Living beings, deluded and confused, turn their backs on awakening and join themselves to the dusts. Thus, the weariness of the dusts is stirred up, and the appearances of the world come into being.

But I, with the wondrous brightness that neither arises nor ceases, unite with the Tathāgata-garbha. And the Tathāgata-garbha is only the wondrous awakened brightness, perfectly illumining the Dharma-realm. Therefore, within it one becomes immeasurable, and the immeasurable becomes one; the great appears in the small, and the small appears in the

great. Without moving from the bodhimaṇḍa, one pervades the worlds of the ten directions. The body contains the endless empty space of the ten directions. Upon the tip of a single hair appear jeweled kingly lands. Seated in a mote of dust, one turns the great Dharma-wheel. When dust is extinguished and one unites with awakening, the wondrous awakened bright nature of true suchness is brought forth.

And this Tathāgata-garbha, this originally wondrous and perfect mind, is not mind, not emptiness, not earth, not water, not wind, not fire; not eye, not ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; not form, not sound, smell, taste, touch, or dharmas; not the realm of eye-consciousness, and so on up to not the realm of mind-consciousness; not brightness, not ignorance, not the ending of brightness and ignorance; and so on up to not old age, not death, not the ending of old age and death; not suffering, not accumulation, not cessation, not the path; not wisdom, not attainment; not dāna, not śīla, not vīrya, not kṣānti, not dhyāna, not prajñā, not pāramitā; and so on up to not Tathāgata, not Arhat, not Samyak-saṃbodhi; not great Nirvāṇa; not permanence, not bliss, not self, not purity—because it is beyond both the worldly and the supramundane.

Yet this Tathāgata-garbha, this wondrous original bright mind, is mind, is emptiness, is earth, is water, is wind, is fire; is eye, is ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; is form, is sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharmas; is the realm of eye-consciousness, and so on up to the realm of mind-consciousness; is brightness, is ignorance, is the ending of brightness and ignorance; and so on up to old age, death, and

the ending of old age and death; is suffering, is accumulation, is cessation, is the path; is wisdom, is attainment; is dāna, is śīla, is vīrya, is kṣānti, is dhyāna, is prajñā, is pāramitā; and so on up to Tathāgata, Arhat, and Samyak-saṃbodhi; is great Nirvāṇa; is permanence, is bliss, is self, is purity—because it is both the worldly and the supramundane.

Thus, the wondrous bright source of the Tathāgata-garbha is beyond both "is" and "is not," yet is precisely "is" and "is not." How then can beings of the three realms in the world, and even the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas beyond the world, use their perceiving minds to speculate the Thus Come One's unsurpassed Bodhi, or use worldly language to enter the Buddha's knowing and seeing?

It is like the musical instruments such as qin, the se, the konghou, and the pipa: though they each possess wondrous sound, without skillful fingers they can never bring it forth. You and all living beings are likewise so. The precious awakened true mind is complete in each and every one. When I press my finger, the ocean-seal emits light. But the moment you stir your minds, the weariness of the dusts arises first, because you do not diligently seek the unsurpassed path of awakening, but cherish the Lesser Vehicle and are content with a little.

Purna said, "My precious awakened nature, perfectly bright, the true and wondrous pure mind, is no different from the Tathagata's and equally complete. Yet in the past I encountered beginningless false thoughts and remained

long in the round of rebirth. Now, though I have attained the holy vehicle, I have still not reached the ultimate end. World-Honored One, all falsehood in the Tathagata has been completely extinguished, and only the wondrous true constancy remains. I dare ask the Tathagata: by what cause do all living beings have delusion, so that they obscure the wondrous brightness and undergo this sinking and drowning?"

The Buddha said to Pūrṇa:

"Though you have cast off your doubt, your remaining delusions are not yet exhausted. I will now ask you again by means of things plainly before us in the world. Have you not heard of Yajñadatta in the city of Śrāvastī? One morning, suddenly looking at his face in a mirror, he delighted in seeing his head, brows, and eyes clearly reflected there. But then he angrily blamed his own head for not showing him its face, and, thinking it had been stolen by a demon, ran off madly for no reason.

What do you think? For what cause did this man run madly away without reason?"

Pūrṇa said, "That man's mind was mad. There was no other cause."

The Buddha said:

"The wondrous awakened brightness is perfectly complete;

original completeness is wondrously bright. Once it is called delusion, how could it have a cause? If it had a cause, how could it still be called delusion?

From one false thought, false thoughts succeed one another as causes. From delusion piled upon delusion, they continue through dust-like kalpas. Though the Buddha may make this clear, one still cannot turn back by tracing out such a cause.

Such a cause of delusion is only something that delusion posits for itself. But when one knows that delusion has no cause, then falsehood has nothing on which to rest. If it has not truly arisen, what is there to extinguish?

One who attains Bodhi is like a man awake speaking of things in a dream. However clear his mind may be, by what causes and conditions could he take hold of anything from that dream? How much less when there is in truth no cause and originally nothing at all.

It is like Yajñadatta in that city: what cause or condition was there for him to fear his own head and run away? When the madness suddenly ceased, the head was not obtained from outside. Even before the madness ceased, what had ever been lost?"

Pūrṇa, delusion is just like this—where, then, could its cause be found?

You need only cease following the three continuities of the

world, karmic result, and living beings, as discriminated by the mind. When those three conditions are cut off, the three causes do not arise. Then the madness of Yajñadatta within your own mind will cease of itself. When it ceases, that is Bodhi.

The supremely pure and luminous mind originally pervades the Dharma-realm. It is not obtained from another. Why, then, must one depend on toil and contrived cultivation to realize it?

It is like a person who has tied a wish-fulfilling jewel within his own robe yet does not realize it. Poor and destitute, he wanders in foreign lands, begging for food and running about. Though he is truly poor, the jewel has never once been lost. Suddenly a wise man points out the jewel to him. Then whatever he wishes is fulfilled, and he becomes greatly wealthy. Only then does he awaken to the fact that the wondrous jewel was not obtained from outside.

At once Ananda, in the midst of the great assembly, bowed at the Buddha's feet, rose, and said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, you have just said that when the three conditions of killing, stealing, and lust are cut off, the three causes do not arise; that the madness of Yajnadatta within the mind ceases of itself; that when it ceases, that is Bodhi; and that it is not obtained from another.

"This makes causes and conditions seem perfectly clear.

Why then does the Tathagata suddenly cast aside causes and conditions?

"It was through causes and conditions that I came to understanding and awakening. World-Honored One, this is not true only for us younger Hearers still in training. Even in this very assembly, Mahamaudgalyayana, Sariputra, Subhuti, and the others, having formerly learned from old Brahmins, heard the Buddha teach causes and conditions, brought forth the mind of awakening, and attained the state beyond outflows.

"If you now say that Bodhi does not arise from causes and conditions, then would not the naturalism taught by Kausalya and the others in Rajagriha become the highest truth?

"I only pray that the World-Honored One, in great compassion, will open up our confusion and dispel our perplexity."

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

"It is like Yajñadatta in the city: if the causes and conditions of his madness were removed, then the state of not being mad would naturally appear. The principles of causes and conditions and of naturalness are exhausted at this very point.

Ānanda, Yajñadatta's head was originally there of itself. It was naturally his own from the beginning. Apart from what is naturally so, there was nothing else. For what causes and

conditions, then, should he become frightened of his own head and run about in madness?

If the head, being naturally there, became mad because of causes and conditions, then why should it not also, by causes and conditions, naturally be lost? But the head was never lost. The mad fear arose falsely. There was never any real change. What need, then, is there to speak of causes and conditions?

If madness were natural, then the fear and madness must always have been there. Before he became mad, where was that madness concealed? But if sanity were natural, then the head itself was originally never deluded. Why then did he run in madness?

If one awakens to the fact that the head was originally there, and recognizes that the mad running was false, then causes and conditions and naturalness are both mere idle talks.

Therefore, I say that as soon as the three conditions are cut off, that itself is the Bodhi-mind. When the Bodhi-mind arises, the mind of arising and ceasing is extinguished. But this is only the cessation of arising and ceasing. When both arising and ceasing are exhausted, there is the Way beyond contrivance and effort.

If there were such a thing as naturalness, then this would simply mean that the mind of naturalness is born, and the mind of arising and ceasing is extinguished. But that too still belongs to arising and ceasing. That which is free from

arising and ceasing is what may be called natural.

It is like things in the world: when various appearances are mixed together into one whole, this is called the nature of combination. What is not combined is called the nature of what is originally so. But what is originally so is not merely 'so,' and what is combined is not merely 'combined.' When both combination and so-ness are left behind, and both separation and combination are denied, only then may this be called the Dharma free from idle speculation.

Bodhi and Nirvāṇa are still far from you. They are not attained by your toilsome cultivation through kalpas. Though you may remember and recite the pure and wondrous principles of the twelve divisions of the teachings of the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions, as many as the sands of the Ganges, it only adds to idle discourse.

Though you speak of causes and conditions and of naturalness with certainty and clarity, and though among people you are praised as foremost in learning, still, through this accumulated learning and habitual hearing over kalpas, you could not even escape the afflictions inflicted by Mātaṅgī.

Had it not been for my Buddha-Crown mantra, Mātaṅgī's lustful fire would not at once have been extinguished. She would not have attained the fruit of Anāgāmin, nor in my Dharma become part of the forest of vigorous cultivation. The river of love would not have dried up, and you would not have been delivered.

Therefore, Ānanda, though through kalpas you may remember and preserve the Thus Come One's secret and wondrous teachings, it is not equal to practicing for even a single day the undefiled path, far removed from the two sufferings of hatred and love in the world.

Mātaṅgī, who in the past had been a lustful woman, by the power of the mantra had her craving and desire dissolved. In the Dharma she is now known as the Bhikṣuṇī Nature. Together with Yaśodharā, the mother of Rāhula, she awakened to the causes of former lives, knowing that through age after age greed and love had been suffering. Because in a single thought they were permeated with undefiled goodness, one was freed from bondage, and the other received a prediction.

How can you still deceive yourself, remaining content merely with seeing and hearing?"

Ananda and the whole assembly, having heard the Buddha's instruction, had their doubts dispelled and their minds awakened to the true reality. Body and mind became light and at ease, and they attained what they had never known before. Again, they wept with gratitude, bowed at the Buddha's feet, knelt long with palms joined, and said to the Buddha:

"Supremely compassionate, pure Jewel King, how well you have opened my mind! By such various causes and conditions, and by such skillful means of encouragement and guidance, you have led those sunk in darkness out of the sea of suffering.

"World-Honored One, though I have now received such a Dharma-voice, and know that the wondrous awakened bright mind of the Tathagata-store pervades the ten directions, containing within it the Tathagata's lands of the ten directions—the pure, adorned, wondrous kingly Buddha-fields—still the Tathagata has reproved me that much learning is of no use if it does not reach actual practice.

"I am now like a traveler lodging abroad who has suddenly been given a magnificent house by a heavenly king. Though he has obtained the great mansion, he still needs a door by which to enter.

"I only pray that the Tathagata, not forsaking great compassion, will show to us here in the assembly, who are still in darkness, the path by which we may cast aside the Lesser Vehicle and at last attain the Tathagata's unsurpassed Nirvana, the very path of the original resolve. Let those still in training know by what means they are to subdue their former clinging and wandering, attain dharani, and enter the Buddha's knowing and seeing."

Having spoken thus, he prostrated himself with all five parts of his body to the ground. And the whole assembly, with single-minded attention, awaited the Buddha's compassionate instruction.

At that time, the World-Honored One, out of compassion for those in the assembly—the Pratyekabuddhas and the Sravakas whose bodhi-mind was not yet fully at ease—and also for

beings in the final Dharma age after the Buddha's passing, who would bring forth the bodhi-mind, opened the wondrous path of cultivation of the unsurpassed vehicle.

He declared to Ananda and the whole assembly:

"If you are determined to bring forth the bodhi-mind and, with regard to the wondrous samadhi of the Tathagata, not grow weary or slack, then you must first clearly understand two decisive principles concerning the initial resolve of awakening."

"What are the two decisive principles concerning the initial resolve of awakening?"

Ānanda, the first of these is this: if you wish to cast aside the path of the Śrāvakas, cultivate the Bodhisattva Vehicle, and enter the Buddha's knowledge and vision, then you must carefully examine whether the aspirations brought forth on the causal ground is the same as, or different from, the awakening on the ground of fruition.

Ānanda, if on the causal ground you take a conditioned mind of arising and ceasing as the basis of cultivation, and yet seek the Buddha Vehicle which is unborn and undying, there can be no such thing.

For this reason, you should clearly observe that all conditioned things in the material world, all that can be made, are subject to change and destruction.

Ānanda, look at the things of the world that can be made: which of them does not decay? Yet one never hears of empty space rotting away. Why is this? Because empty space is not something made. Therefore, from beginning to end, it is without destruction or extinction.

But within your own body, what is solid is earth, what is moist is water, what is warm to the touch is fire, and what moves is wind. By these four bonds, your still, perfect, wondrously awakened bright mind is divided into seeing, hearing, awareness, and discernment. From beginning to end, there are five layers of turbidity.

What, then, is meant by "turbidity"?

Ānanda, it is like clear water, pure and clean in itself. But dust, earth, ashes, and sand are by their very nature coarse and obstructive. The two kinds are simply so in themselves, and their natures do not accord with one another.

If a person in the world takes that dirt and throws it into pure water, then the dirt loses its coarse solidity, and the water loses its clarity and purity. Its appearance becomes muddied and turbid; this is what is called "turbidity."

Your five layers of turbidity are likewise so.

"Ananda, you see empty space pervading the ten directions. Space and seeing are not yet distinguished. There is space, yet no real substance to it; there is seeing, yet no true awareness

in it. These are falsely interwoven and thus brought into being. This is the first layer, called the turbidity of the kalpa.

"Your present body is formed by the Four Great Elements as its substance. Seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing are crowded in and made into obstruction; while water, fire, wind, and earth in turn become what is felt and known. These are falsely interwoven and thus brought into being. This is the second layer, called the turbidity of view.

"Again, within your mind, memory, recognition, recitation, and habitual learning bring forth knowing and perceiving by nature, and the six dusts appear within them. Apart from the dusts there is no mark; apart from awareness there is no nature. These are falsely interwoven and thus brought into being. This is the third layer, called the turbidity of afflictions.

"Again, from morning to evening, arising and ceasing never stop. Your knowing and perceiving always wish to remain in the world, while the force of karma constantly carries you onward through countries and realms. These are falsely interwoven and thus brought into being. This is the fourth layer, called the turbidity of living beings.

"And as for you all, seeing and hearing are originally of one nature. Yet the various dusts separate and obstruct them, so that differences arise where there is no true difference. In the nature itself they know one another, but in their functioning they oppose one another. The standard of sameness and difference is lost. These are falsely interwoven and thus

brought into being. This is the fifth layer, called the turbidity of life."

Ānanda, if you now wish the seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing to accord, from afar, with the Tathāgata's eternity, bliss, true self, and purity, you should first discern the root of cycle of birth and death.

Rely upon the perfectly clear and still nature that is unborn and undying. With that stillness, turn back the false arising and ceasing; subdue it and return to the original awakening. When you obtain the originally luminous awakened nature, free from birth and death, and take it as the mind of your causal ground, then the cultivation and realization of the fruition-ground may be perfectly accomplished.

It is like clarifying muddy water. When it is stored in a still vessel, and remains deeply still and unmoving, the sand and soil naturally sink, and clear water appears. This is called the initial subduing of the guest-dust afflictions.

When the mud is removed and only pure water remains, this is called the permanent severing of fundamental ignorance.

When the aspect of clarity is refined and pure, then all transformations that appear are no longer afflictions; they all accord with the pure and wondrous virtues of nirvāṇa.

As for the second meaning: if you truly wish to bring forth the bodhi-mind, and within the Bodhisattva Vehicle give rise

to great courage and vigor, firmly resolving to abandon all conditioned appearances, then you should carefully examine the root of affliction.

From beginningless time until now, in the process of generating karma and nourishing birth, who is the one who acts, and who is the one who undergoes the result?

Ānanda, as you cultivate bodhi, if you do not carefully examine the root of affliction, then you will not know where the false faculties and their objects become inverted.

If you do not even know the place where this inversion occurs, how could you subdue it and attain the position of a Tathāgata?

Ānanda, consider those in the world who untie knots: if they do not see where the knot is, how could they know how to untie it?

You have never heard of empty space being split apart by you. Why is this so? Because empty space has no shape or form; therefore, it has neither knot nor release.

Thus your present eyes, ears, nose, and tongue, together with body and mind—these six become the agents of thieves, robbing the treasures of your own house.

Because of this, from beginningless time, within the world of sentient beings there arises bondage and entanglement;

therefore, they cannot transcend the material world.

Ānanda, what is meant by "the world of sentient beings"?

"World" means continual change and flow; "boundary" means direction and position.

You should now understand: east, west, south, north, southeast, southwest, northeast, northwest, above, and below —these are called "boundaries." Past, future, and present —these are called "world," that is, the flow of time.

There are ten directions, and there are three modes of temporal flow.

All sentient beings weave falsity together and thereby come into being. Within the body there is continual exchange and shifting; thus "world" and "boundary" interpenetrate one another.

Now, although the nature of boundary may be established as the ten directions, fixed positions can be clearly known. Yet in ordinary usage, the world only names east, west, south, and north; above and below have no fixed position, and the center has no definite direction. Therefore, the number four must be clearly established.

When this fourfold direction interrelates with the threefold flow of time, three with four and four with three turn and unfold into twelve.

Through three layers of flowing transformation, they become one, ten, hundred, and thousand.

Gathering together beginning and end, within the six faculties, each faculty possesses twelve hundred merits and functions.

Ānanda, within these six faculties you should further determine their superiority and inferiority.

Take the eye's seeing as an example: behind it there is darkness, before it there is brightness. The front is completely bright; the rear is completely dark. To the left and right, its sideward seeing reaches only two thirds. Speaking of its function as a whole, its merit is not complete. Of the three parts, two have function, while one lacks virtue. Therefore, you should know that the eye has only eight hundred merits and functions.

Take the ear's hearing as an example: it hears throughout all ten directions, leaving nothing out. When there is movement, it hears whether near or far; when there is stillness, its range has no boundary. Therefore, you should know that the ear faculty is complete with twelve hundred merits and functions.

Take the nose's smelling as an example: it depends upon the outgoing and incoming breath. There is exhalation and inhalation, yet the interval between them is lacking. Examining the nose faculty, one part out of three is deficient. Therefore, you should know that the nose has only eight

hundred merits and functions.

Take the tongue's proclamation as an example: it can express all wisdom, both worldly and world-transcending. Speech has its measures and limits, but the principle it conveys is inexhaustible. Therefore, you should know that the tongue faculty is complete with twelve hundred merits and functions.

Take the body's awareness of touch as an example: it distinguishes what is disagreeable and agreeable. When there is contact, it can know; when there is separation, it does not know. In separation there is only one condition; in contact, two aspects are known. Examining the body faculty, one part out of three is deficient. Therefore, you should know that the body has only eight hundred merits and functions.

Take the mind's silent capacity to contain as an example: all dharmas of the ten directions and the three periods of time, whether worldly or world-transcending, whether of sages or ordinary beings—there is none that it does not encompass, reaching to the full extent of their boundaries. Therefore, you should know that the mind faculty is complete with twelve hundred merits and functions.

Ānanda, if you now wish to go against the current of desire within the cycles of birth and death, to turn back and trace this current to its root, until you arrive at what is unborn and undying, then you should examine these six faculties of reception and function.

Which of them knows through contact, and which through separation?

Which is deep, and which is shallow?

Which is perfectly penetrating, and which is not complete?

If, within these, you can awaken to the faculty that is perfectly penetrating, then you may go against that beginningless current of karma woven from falsity. If you can follow the perfectly penetrating faculty, then, compared with following a faculty that is not complete, the difference in progress will be like a single day compared with an entire kalpa.

I have now fully shown the original merits and functions of these six clear, still, perfectly luminous faculties; their measures are as I have described. According to your own careful discernment, choose the one through which you may enter. I shall then further reveal it, so that you may advance.

The Tathāgatas of the ten directions, cultivating through each one of the eighteen realms, have all attained perfect and unsurpassed bodhi. Among them, in truth, there is no superiority or inferiority.

But you are of lesser capacity and are not yet able, within all of them, to exercise perfect and sovereign wisdom. Therefore, I have proclaimed this teaching, so that you may simply enter deeply through a single gate.

When you enter one gate and reach freedom from falsity, the six faculties of knowing will at once become pure.

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, how is it that, by going against the current and entering deeply through a single gate/practice, one can cause all six faculties to become pure at the same time?"

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

"You have now attained the fruit of stream-entry into sainthood (Srotāpanna). You have already extinguished, within the sentient world of the three realms, the delusions that are to be severed through seeing.

Yet you still do not know the beginningless, accumulated, empty habits stored within the faculties. These habits must be severed through cultivation.

How much more, then, regarding the arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing within them—their distinctions, measures, and numbers?

Now, for the moment, observe the six faculties presently before you: are they one, or are they six?

Ānanda, if you say they are one, why does the ear not see? Why does the eye not hear? Why does the head not walk?

Why do the feet not speak?

But if these six faculties are definitely six, then now, as I proclaim this subtle and wondrous Dharma to you in this assembly, which of your six faculties receives it?"

Ānanda said:

"I use my ear to hear."

The Buddha said:

"If your ear hears by itself, what does that have to do with your body and mouth?

Yet your mouth comes forth to ask about the meaning, and your body rises in reverent acceptance.

Therefore, you should know: they are not one, for they still function as six; they are not six, for they still return to one.

In the end, your faculties are not originally one, nor are they originally six.

Ānanda, you should understand: these faculties are neither one nor six.

Because, from beginningless time, there has been inversion, sinking, and displacement, the meanings of 'one' and 'six' have arisen within the perfectly clear and still nature.

You are a Srotāpanna. Although you have attained the dissolving of the six, you have not yet let go of the one.

It is like vast empty space mingled with many vessels. Because the vessels have different shapes, they are called different spaces.

When the vessels are removed and space is contemplated, space is contemplated of as one.

But how could that vast empty space become, for you, either the same or different?

How much less should it further be named as one or not-one?

Therefore, you should understand that the six faculties of reception and function are also just like this."

The Buddha continued:

Because of the mutual contrasting of the two appearances of light and darkness, within the wondrous perfect nature, clinging to the clear and still gives rise to seeing. The essence of seeing reflects forms; binding with form, it becomes a faculty. The original basis of this faculty is called the pure four elements. Thus, it is named the eye-organ, like a cluster of grapes. The floating sensory organ, formed from the four dust-like elements, streams outward and rushes toward forms.

Because of the mutual striking of the two appearances of

movement and stillness, within the wondrous perfect nature, clinging to the clear and still gives rise to hearing. The essence of hearing reflects sound; curling around sound, it becomes a faculty. The original basis of this faculty is called the pure four elements. Thus, it is named the ear-organ, like a newly rolled leaf. The floating sensory organ, formed from the four dust-like elements, streams outward and rushes toward sounds.

Because of the arousal of the two appearances of free passage and obstruction, within the wondrous perfect nature, clinging to the clear and still gives rise to smelling. The essence of smell reflects fragrance; drawing in fragrance, it becomes a faculty. The original basis of this faculty is called the pure four elements. Thus, it is named the nose-organ, like two hanging claws. The floating sensory organ, formed from the four dust-like elements, streams outward and rushes toward scents.

Because of the intermingling of the two appearances of blandness and variation, within the wondrous perfect nature, clinging to the clear and still gives rise to tasting. The essence of taste reflects flavors; winding around flavor, it becomes a faculty. The original basis of this faculty is called the pure four elements. Thus, it is named the tongue-organ, like a first crescent moon. The floating sensory organ, formed from the four dust-like elements, streams outward and rushes toward flavors.

Because of the mutual friction of the two appearances of

separation and contact, within the wondrous perfect nature, clinging to the clear and still gives rise to bodily awareness. The essence of awareness reflects touch; gathering touch together, it becomes a faculty. The original basis of this faculty is called the pure four elements. Thus it is named the body-organ, like the face of a waist-drum. The floating sensory organ, formed from the four dust-like elements, streams outward and rushes toward objects of touch.

Because of the continuing succession of the two appearances of arising and ceasing, within the wondrous perfect nature, clinging to the clear and still gives rise to knowing. The essence of knowing reflects dharmas; gathering dharmas, it becomes a faculty. The original basis of this faculty is called the pure four elements. Thus, it is named the mind-faculty, like seeing within a dark chamber. The floating sensory organ, formed from the four dust-like elements, streams outward and rushes toward dharmas.

Ānanda, these six faculties arise because, from that awakened brightness, there comes to be a brightness that seeks to brighten awakening. Thus, the original pure clarity is lost, and by clinging to falsity, a reflected light is produced.

Therefore, now, apart from darkness and apart from light, there is no substance of seeing.

Apart from movement and apart from stillness, there is originally no essence of hearing.

Without free passage and obstruction, the nature of smelling does not arise.

Without variation and blandness, tasting has no source from which to emerge.

Without separation and contact, the awareness of touch is fundamentally nonexistent.

Without ceasing and arising, where could knowing and understanding be lodged?

You need only not follow the movement and stillness, contact and separation, blandness and variation, free passage and obstruction, arising and ceasing, light and darkness—these twelve conditioned appearances.

Then, according to whichever one faculty you pull free, once it is released from its clinging and inwardly subdued, it returns in submission to the original truth, and the original luminous radiance comes forth.

When that radiant nature is brought to light, the remaining five forms of clinging will also be pulled free and perfectly released.

Then your knowing and seeing will no longer arise from the external objects before you.

The brightness will no longer follow the faculties; rather, it

will be lodged in the faculties and shine forth through them.

Because of this, the six faculties will function interchangeably with one another.

Ānanda, do you not know that here in this assembly, Aniruddha sees without eyes; the dragon Bhadrapāla hears without ears; the goddess of the Ganges perceives fragrance without using the nose; Gavāṃpati knows taste by means other than the tongue; and the god Śūnyatā, having no body, is aware of touch.

Within the Tathāgata's light, he is reflected and made temporarily manifest. Since his substance is of the nature of wind, his body originally has no solid existence.

As for those śrāvakas who have attained stillness through the cessation-attainment, such as Mahākāśyapa in this assembly: he has long extinguished the mind-faculty, yet he perfectly and luminously knows, without relying upon mental thought.

Ānanda, when your faculties have now been completely pulled free, the inner clarity will shine forth.

Then these floating dusts, together with all the changing appearances of the vessel-world, will be like ice melted by hot water.

In response to the very thought, they will be transformed into unsurpassed awakened knowing.

Ānanda, it is like people in the world who gather seeing in the eyes.

If they are made to close their eyes tightly, darkness appears before them. The six faculties become dim, and head and feet seem alike.

Yet if such a person uses his hand to trace around the outside of another's body, although he does not see, he can still clearly distinguish the head from the feet. The knowing and awareness are the same.

When seeing depends upon brightness as its condition, darkness becomes absence of sight.

But if the brightness does not rely upon external light and instead shines forth of itself, then no appearance of darkness can ever obscure it.

Once the faculties and their objects have both dissolved, how could awakened luminosity fail to become perfect and wondrous?

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, as the Buddha has said, if the awakened mind of the causal ground seeks what is everlasting, it must correspond in name and meaning with the fruition-stage.

World-Honored One, in the fruition-stage there are bodhi, nirvāṇa, true suchness, Buddha-nature, amalavijñāna, the empty Tathāgata-garbha, and the great perfect mirror wisdom. These are seven names. Though their designations differ, they are pure and complete; their essence is firm and solid, like the vajra king—ever-abiding and indestructible.

But if this seeing and hearing, apart from brightness and darkness, movement and stillness, free passage and obstruction, ultimately have no substance, then they are like the thinking mind: apart from the objects before it, it has nothing at all.

How, then, can one take what is ultimately cut off and extinguished as the cause of cultivation, and expect to obtain the Tathāgata's seven everlasting fruits?

World-Honored One, if apart from brightness and darkness, seeing is ultimately empty; and if, without objects before it, the very nature of thought ceases, then whether advancing or retreating, turning this over in subtle examination, there is originally no mind of mine and no mental factors belonging to my mind.

Who, then, is to establish the cause and seek unsurpassed awakening?

The Tathāgata previously said that the clear, refined essence is perfect and eternal. But this now seems to contradict those sincere words and would finally become mere idle discourse.

How, then, can the Tathāgata be one who speaks truly?

I only pray that you extend your great compassion and open my obscured understanding."

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

"You have studied much through hearing, yet you have not exhausted the outflows. In your mind, you merely know the causes of inversion; but when true inversion appears before you, you are in fact unable to recognize it.

Fearing that your sincere mind still has not believed and submitted, I shall now take an ordinary worldly matter and use it to remove your doubt."

At that time, the Tathāgata commanded Rāhula to strike the bell once.

He asked Ānanda, "Do you now hear?"

Ānanda and the great assembly all said, "We hear."

When the bell had stopped and there was no sound, the Buddha again asked, "Do you now hear?"

Ānanda and the great assembly all said, "We do not hear."

Then Rāhula struck the bell once more.

The Buddha again asked, “Do you now hear?”

Ānanda and the great assembly again said, “We all hear.”

The Buddha asked Ānanda, “What do you call hearing, and what do you call not hearing?”

Ānanda and the great assembly all said to the Buddha:

“When the bell is struck, we hear. After it has been struck for a while and the sound disappears, when both the sound and its echo have ceased, this is called not hearing.”

The Tathāgata again commanded Rāhula to strike the bell.

He asked Ānanda, “Is there now sound?”

Ānanda and the great assembly all said, “There is sound.”

After a short while, the sound disappeared.

The Buddha again asked, “Is there now sound?”

Ānanda and the great assembly answered, “There is no sound.”

After a little while, Rāhula again came and struck the bell.

The Buddha again asked, “Is there now sound?”

Ānanda and the great assembly all said, "There is sound."

The Buddha asked Ānanda, "What do you call sound, and what do you call no sound?"

Ānanda and the great assembly all said to the Buddha:

"When the bell is struck, this is called having sound. After it has been struck for a while and the sound disappears, when both the sound and its echo have ceased, this is called no sound."

The Buddha said to Ānanda and the great assembly:

"How is it that you now speak in such confused contradiction?"

Ānanda and the great assembly all asked the Buddha at the same time:

"How are we now said to be confused and contradictory?"

The Buddha said:

"When I asked you about hearing, you answered that you heard. When I asked you about sound, you answered that there was sound. As for hearing and sound, your replies are not fixed. How can this not be called confused contradiction?

Ānanda, when the sound has disappeared and there is no

echo, you say there is no hearing.

If there were truly no hearing, then the nature of hearing would already have ceased, and you would be the same as dead wood.

When the bell is struck again, how could you know it?

To know that there is sound and to know that there is no sound—this is simply the sound-object being either present or absent.

How could that nature of hearing become present or absent for you?

If hearing were truly said to be absent, then who would know that absence?

Therefore, Ānanda, sound has its own arising and ceasing within hearing. It is not that, because you hear sound arising and sound ceasing, your nature of hearing thereby becomes present or absent.

You are still inverted: you confuse sound with hearing. No wonder, then, that in your obscurity and confusion you take what is constant to be annihilated.

You should never say—”

You should never say that, apart from movement and

stillness, obstruction and openness, the nature of hearing has no essence.

It is like a person in deep sleep, lying asleep upon his bed and pillow. In his household, while he is asleep, someone is pounding cloth and hulling rice.

In his dream, this person hears the sounds of pounding and beating but mistakes them for something else—perhaps for the beating of a drum, or perhaps for the striking of a bell.

Then, while still dreaming, he wonders to himself why the bell sounds like wood or stone.

At that moment, he suddenly wakes, and at once recognizes that it was the sound of a pestle. He tells the people in his house, "Just now, while I was dreaming, I mistook the sound of pounding for the sound of a drum."

Ānanda, in that person's dream, did he remember stillness and movement, opening and closing, free passage and obstruction?

Although his body was asleep, the nature of hearing was not dimmed.

Even if your physical form dissolves and the light of your life passes away, how could this nature be dissolved and extinguished because of you?

Because sentient beings, from beginningless time, have followed forms and sounds, pursuing thought after thought as they flow and turn, they have never awakened to the pure, wondrous, and constant nature.

They do not follow what is constant but pursue all things that arise and cease. Because of this, life after life, they flow on in mixed defilement.

If one abandons what arises and ceases, and abides in the true and constant, then the constant light will appear before one.

The faculties, their objects, consciousness, and mind will at once dissolve and fall away.

The mental objects attached to the mind are dusts; the emotional grasping of consciousness is defilement.

When both are completely left behind, your Dharma-eye will at once become clear and bright.

How, then, could you fail to accomplish unsurpassed awakened knowing?

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Ananda said to the Buddha, "World-Honored One, although the Tathagata has spoken of the second decisive principle, when I now look at people in the world who untie knots, if they do not know the source of what is tied, I believe such a person can never untie it. World-Honored One, so it is also with me and with the Hearers in this assembly who are still in training. From beginningless time, we have been born and died together with all ignorance. Though we possess such good roots from much hearing, and are called those who have left home, we are still like one afflicted with a fever that returns every other day.

"I only pray that the World-Honored One, in great compassion, will pity those who are sunk and drowning. Tell us today: how is body and mind to be called bound, and from what is it called release? And also enable the suffering beings of the future to escape transmigration and not fall into the three realms."

Having spoken thus, he and the whole assembly prostrated themselves with all five parts of the body to the ground, shedding tears in utter sincerity, awaiting the Tathagata's unsurpassed instruction.

At that time, the World-Honored One, out of compassion for Ananda and for those in the assembly still in training, and also for all future beings—that this teaching might become

for them the cause of liberation and an eye for the future—touched Ananda's head with his hand of Jambunada purple-golden light.

At once, throughout the Buddha-worlds of the ten directions, there were six kinds of trembling. In those worlds where Tathagatas as numerous as motes of dust were abiding, each emitted a precious light from the crown of his head. All those lights at the same time came from those worlds to the Jeta Grove and poured upon the crown of the Tathagata. The whole assembly attained what they had never known before.

Thereupon Ananda and the whole assembly together heard the Tathagatas of the ten directions, countless as dust motes, speak with different mouths but a single voice, saying to Ananda:

"Excellent indeed, Ananda! If you wish to know the beginningless ignorance that causes you to revolve in birth and death, the knot-root of that revolving is nothing other than your six faculties.

"And if you wish to know the unsurpassed Bodhi that will enable you quickly to realize peaceful liberation, quiescence, and wondrous constancy, that too is nothing other than your six faculties."

Although Ananda had heard this Dharma-voice, his mind was still not yet clear. He bowed his head and said to the Buddha:

“How is it that these very six faculties, and nothing else, cause me to revolve in birth and death, and yet these very same six faculties, and nothing else, become peaceful bliss and wondrous constancy?”

The Buddha said to Ananda:

“The faculties and the dusts have the same source. Bondage and release are not two. The nature of consciousness is false and illusory, like flowers in empty space.

“Ananda, because of the dusts, knowing is brought forth; because of the faculties, appearances arise. Yet appearances and seeing have no self-nature and are like two reeds leaning against one another.

“Therefore, what now happens is this: when, upon knowing and seeing, you further set up another knowing and seeing, that is the root of ignorance. But when, within knowing and seeing, there is no added seeing, that itself is Nirvana - the true purity without outflows.

“How could there be room in this for anything else?”

At that time, the World-Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke these verses:

“The true nature of conditioned things is empty;

Because they arise from conditions, they are like illusions.

The unconditioned has no arising or ceasing;

It is unreal, like flowers in empty space.

To speak of delusion in order to reveal the true -

Both delusion and truth, so conceived, are two delusions.

Even ‘not true’ and ‘not untrue’ are still not reached -

How then can there be seeing and what is seen?

Between the two there is no real nature at all;

Thus they are like reeds leaning against one another.

Bondage and release share the same cause;

For sage and ordinary being, there are not two paths.

Look into the nature of that which leans together -

Both emptiness and existence are denied there.

Dark confusion is just ignorance;

When brightness is brought forth, there is liberation.

The undoing of the knots depends on order and sequence;

When the six are released, the one also disappears.

Choose the faculty that is perfect and penetrating;

Turn the flow back, and perfect awakening is accomplished.

The subtle consciousness of Dana,

With its habitual energies, becomes a rushing torrent.

Because true and not-true may cause confusion,

I have not always openly taught it.

The mind takes hold of its own mind;

What is not illusory becomes the dharma of illusion.

If there is no grasping, then nothing is not illusion;

When even what is not illusion does not arise,

How could illusory dharmas stand?

This is called the wondrous lotus blossom,

The vajra-king's precious awakening,

The samadhi that is like illusion.

With a snap of the fingers one goes beyond the stage of study.

This is the Abhidharma;

For the Bhagavans of the ten directions,

It is the single gate to Nirvana."

At that time, Ananda and the whole assembly, having heard the Tathagata's unsurpassed compassionate instruction—with its verses and gathas woven together in lucid brilliance, and its wondrous meaning pure and penetrating - found their minds and eyes opened in clarity, and marveled at what they had never known before.

Ananda, with palms joined, bowed and said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, I have now heard the Buddha's all-embracing compassion, and these true words of the pure, wondrous, and ever-abiding nature. Yet my mind has still not fully understood how, when the six are released, the one is lost, nor the order in which the knots are untied.

"I only pray that the World-Honored One, in great compassion, will again take pity on this assembly and on those of the future, and bestow the sound of Dharma to wash away our sunken defilements."

At once, the Tathagata, seated on the Lion-Throne, arranged his nirvana-sanghati, gathered in his outer robe, drew toward

him the seven-jeweled table, stretched out his hand upon it, and took up the flower-cloth offered by the deva Kapila. Before the great assembly, he tied it into a single knot and showed it to Ananda, saying, “What is this called?”

Ananda and the whole assembly said to the Buddha, “This is called a knot.”

Then the Tathagata tied the flower-cloth over again and made another knot. Again he asked Ananda, “What is this called?”

Ananda and the whole assembly again said to the Buddha, “This too is called a knot.”

Thus, in order, the Tathagata tied the flower-cloth again and again, until in all there were six knots. Each time a knot was formed, he took up the knot made in his hand and asked Ananda, “What is this called?”

Ananda and the whole assembly, in the same way, answered the Buddha one after another, saying, “This is called a knot.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

“When I first tied up the cloth, you called it a knot. This patterned cloth was originally but a single strip. Why then, when I tie it a second time or a third time, do you still call those knots?”

Ānanda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, this precious patterned cloth, though originally one single piece, has been woven into a scarf. As I understand it, when the Thus Come One ties it once, that is called one knot. If it were tied a hundred times, then in the end it would be called a hundred knots. How much more in the case of this cloth, which has only six knots: in the end they cannot become seven, nor can they stop at five. Why then does the Thus Come One allow only the first tying to be called a knot, and not the second or third as well?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "This jeweled flower-cloth—you know that originally it is only a single strip. Yet when I tied it six times, there came to be six knots. Look carefully: the body of the cloth is the same, but because of the knots there are distinctions. What do you think? When the first knot was tied, it was called the first. And so on until the sixth knot came to be. If I were now to call the sixth knot the first, would that be possible?"

"No, World-Honored One. So long as the six knots remain, the sixth can never be called the first. Even if through many lives I exhausted all my discernment and eloquence, how could I make the names of these six knots confused?"

The Buddha said, "The six knots are not the same; yet if one traces them back to their source, they are all made from a single cloth. To make them confused in name can never succeed. So too with your six faculties: within what is ultimately the same, there arises what is ultimately different."

The Buddha said to Ananda, “If you are dissatisfied that these six knots remain, and would rejoice to have them become one, how could that be done?”

Ananda said, “So long as these knots remain, distinctions and oppositions arise among them. From within them there comes to be: this knot is not that one, and that knot is not this one. If today the Tathagata were to untie them all, so that the knots no longer came forth, then there would no longer be this and that. At that point, not even ‘one’ could be named—how then could ‘six’ be established?”

The Buddha said, “When the six are untied, the one also disappears—it is just the same. Because from beginningless time your mind-nature has been thrown into confusion, knowing and seeing falsely arise. When this false arising does not cease, weariness in seeing gives rise to dust, just as strained eyes produce wild flowers in the air. Within the still, pure brightness, disorder arises without cause. All the worlds with their mountains, rivers, and great earth, together with birth and death and even Nirvana, are all just the inverted flower-appearances of this wearied delusion.”

Ananda said, “If this weariness is the same as the knot, how is it to be untied?”

The Tathagata then took the knotted cloth in his hand and pulled at the left side of it, asking Ananda, “Can it be untied like this?”

"'No, World-Honored One.'

"Then the Tathagata turned and pulled the right side again, and asked Ananda, 'Can it be untied like this?'

"'No, World-Honored One.'

"The Buddha said to Ananda, 'I have now pulled it to the left and to the right with my hand, yet in the end I still cannot untie it. Suppose you were to devise a way— how would it be untied?'

"Ananda said to the Buddha, 'World-Honored One, one must work at the knot itself; then the knot will come apart.'

"The Buddha said to Ananda, 'Just so, just so. If you wish to remove the knot, you must work at the knot itself.

"'Ananda, when I speak of the Buddha-Dharma as arising from causes and conditions, I am not taking the coarse worldly appearance of combination. The Tathagata, in revealing both worldly and supramundane dharmas, knows their root causes and from what conditions they arise. He even knows, down to a single drop of rain beyond worlds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, exactly how many there are; and of the many things now before us—whether a pine grows straight, a thorn bends crooked, a swan is white, or a crow is black—he knows the source of each.

"'Therefore, Ananda, among your six faculties, choose the

one that accords with your mind. If the knot of that faculty is untied, the appearance of the dusts will vanish itself. When all falsehood is extinguished, why wait for what is not true?

"Ananda, I now ask you: with these six knots now present in this Kapila cloth, if one were to untie them all at the same time, could they all be removed together?"

"No, World-Honored One. Since these knots were originally tied in sequence, today they must likewise be untied in sequence. Though the six knots are of one substance, the knots themselves were not formed at the same time. How then, when it comes to untying them, could they all be removed together?"

The Buddha said, "So it is also with the release of the six faculties. When this faculty is first released, one first realizes the emptiness of selfhood. When the emptiness-nature becomes perfectly bright, one attains liberation with respect to dharmas. And when even that liberation is emptied, so that emptiness itself no longer arises, this is called the Bodhisattva's attainment of Forbearance of Non-Arising Dharmas."

Ananda and the whole assembly, having received the Buddha's instruction, attained a wisdom-awakening that was perfectly penetrating, and were free from doubt. At one time they joined their palms, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

“Today our bodies and minds are clear and bright, and we have swiftly gained unobstructed understanding. Though we have now understood the principle that when the six are untied the one also disappears, we still have not yet penetrated the root faculty of perfect penetration.

‘World-Honored One, we have drifted and wandered, alone and exposed, through kalpa after kalpa. What thought or longing could ever have made us worthy to be counted among the Buddha’s own? We are like an infant who has lost its mother’s milk and suddenly meets a compassionate mother. Yet even if, by this very encounter, the Way were accomplished, if the secret words we obtain were merely the same as our present understanding, then it would still be no different from having never truly heard at all.

‘We only pray that, out of great compassion, the World-Honored One will bestow upon us the secret adornment and bring to completion the Tathagata’s final instruction.’

Having spoken thus, they prostrated themselves with all five parts of the body to the ground, withdrew and hid their deeper questioning, and awaited the Buddha’s silent bestowal.

At that time, the World-Honored One addressed all the great Bodhisattvas in the assembly and all the great Arhats who had exhausted the outflows:

“You Bodhisattvas and Arhats, having been born within my Dharma, have accomplished the state beyond learning. I

now ask you: when you first brought forth the aspirations for awakening to the eighteen realms, which was the faculty of perfect penetration for you? By what skillful means did you enter samadhi?"

Then the five bhiksus headed by Kaundinya rose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"When I was in the Deer Park and at the Chicken Garden, I beheld the Tathagata first accomplish the Way. By the Buddha's voice and sound, I awakened to the Four Noble Truths. When the Buddha asked the bhiksus, I was the first to understand, and the Tathagata sealed me with the name Ajnata. The wondrous sound was secretly perfect and penetrating. Through sound and voice I attained Arhatship. If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then as far as my own realization is concerned, sound is supreme."

Upanisad at once rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"When I too beheld the Buddha first accomplish the Way, I contemplated the marks of impurity and gave rise to deep revulsion. I awakened to the nature of form, seeing that from impurity, white bones, and subtle dust, all returns to empty space. When both form and emptiness were gone, I accomplished the Way beyond learning. The Tathagata sealed me with the name Nisadatta. When the dust of form was exhausted, wondrous form became secretly perfect and complete. Through the appearance of form I attained

Arhatship. If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my own realization is concerned, form is the foremost cause."

Then Fragrant Adornment Youth rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I heard the Tathagata instruct me to contemplate closely all conditioned appearances. At that time, I took leave of the Buddha and dwelt in stillness and purity. I saw bhiksus burning aloeswood incense, and the fragrance, in quiet stillness, entered my nose. I observed that this fragrance was neither from the wood, nor from empty space, nor from the smoke, nor from the fire. It went without attaching anywhere and came without proceeding from anywhere. Because of this, the activity of mind was extinguished, and the unconditioned was brought to light. The Tathagata sealed me with the name Fragrant Adornment. When the dusty air suddenly vanished, the wondrous fragrance became secretly perfect and complete. Through the adornment of fragrance I attained Arhatship. If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my own realization is concerned, fragrant adornment is supreme."

Medicine King and Superior Medicine, the two Dharma Princes, together with the five hundred Brahma gods present in the assembly, rose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"From beginningless kalpas, we have served as good

physicians in the world. With our mouths we have tasted the grasses, trees, metals, and stones of this Saha world—in all, one hundred and eight thousand kinds. Thus, we have thoroughly known bitterness, sourness, saltiness, blandness, sweetness, pungency, and the rest, together with those flavors that are compounded, innate, or altered in mixture. Whether cold or hot, poisonous or non-poisonous, we have known them all completely.

"In serving the Tathagata, we came to understand that the nature of flavor is neither empty nor existent, neither identical with body and mind nor separate from body and mind. By discerning the cause of flavor, we awakened from this. The Tathagata then sealed us with the names of the two Bodhisattvas Medicine King and Superior Medicine. Now, here in this assembly, we are Dharma Princes. Because of awakening through flavor, we have ascended to the Bodhisattva stage.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as our realization is concerned, flavor as cause is supreme."

Bhadrapāla, together with his sixteen companions, rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"We first heard the Dharma under the Buddha Awesome Voice King and left home to practice. While attending the bathing of the monks, we entered the bath chamber according to custom. Suddenly we awakened to the principle of water: it

washes neither dust nor body. Amid that, there was peace and ease, and nothing at all to be attained.

"The habit cultivated in former lives was never lost, and now, having left home again under the Buddha, we have attained the state beyond further learning. That Buddha named me Bhadrapāla. Through wondrous touch, illumination became clear, and I came to abide as a son of the Buddha.

"The Buddha now asks about perfect penetration. According to what I have realized, the faculty of touch, as the point of entry, is supreme."

Mahakasyapa, together with the bhikshunis of Purple-Golden Light and the others, rose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"In a past kalpa, in this very world, there appeared a Buddha named Sun-Moon-Lamp. I was able to draw near him, hear the Dharma, and cultivate under him. After that Buddha entered Nirvana, I made offerings to his relics, kept the lamps burning continuously, and used purple-golden pigment to adorn the Buddha's image. From that time onward, through life after life, my body has constantly been full and complete as a mass of purple-golden light. These bhikshunis of Purple-Golden Light are my companions, and together at that time we brought forth the mind.

"I contemplated the way the six dusts of the world decay and perish, and only by means of emptiness and quiescence

did I cultivate extinction. Thus, body and mind were able to pass through hundreds of thousands of kalpas as though in the time of a finger snap. By the Dharma of Emptiness and Quiescence I attained Arhatship. The World-Honored One said that among the ascetics who practice dhutanga discipline, I was foremost. Through the wondrous Dharma, illumination was opened, and all outflows were extinguished. If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then as far as my realization is concerned, dharmas as cause are supreme."

Aniruddha at once rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"When I first joined the Sangha, I was always fond of sleep. The Tathagata rebuked me and called me no different from a beast. Hearing the Buddha's reproach, I wept, blamed myself, and for seven days did not sleep, until I lost both my eyes. The World-Honored One then showed me the Vajra Samadhi of joyful seeing and shining awareness. Because of it, I do not use the eyes to behold the ten directions. True essence shines through with unobstructed clarity, like looking at fruit in the palm of the hand. The Tathagata sealed my realization, and I became an Arhat. If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then as far as my own realization is concerned, turning seeing back and following it to the source is supreme."

Then Cudapanthaka rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I lacked the power of memorization and was not by nature inclined to much learning. When I first encountered the Buddha and heard the Dharma, I left home. Yet even when I tried to remember a single gatha spoken by the Tathagata, within a hundred days, when I retained the first line I forgot the second, and when I retained the second I forgot the first. Out of compassion for my dullness, the Buddha taught me to dwell in stillness and regulate the in-breath and out-breath. At that time I contemplated the breath, tracing it to its most subtle end, and saw in all conditioned dharmas their arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing, moment after moment. Then my mind suddenly opened and gained great unobstructed freedom. At last, my outflows were exhausted and I became an Arhat. Beneath the Buddha's seat I was sealed as one beyond learning. If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then as far as my own realization is concerned, turning the breath back and following it into emptiness is supreme."

Gavampati at once rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I had the karma of speech. In a past kalpa I lightly mocked a shramana, and so through life after life I bore the illness of chewing like an ox. The Tathagata showed me the spiritual Dharma-gate of concentration on cultivating the pure mind-ground. I was then able to extinguish the mind and enter samadhi. I contemplated the knowing of flavor and saw that it was neither a substance nor a thing. In a single thought I transcended all worldly outflows. Inwardly I was freed from

body and mind; outwardly I forgot the world. Far removed from the three realms, I was like a bird released from its cage. Defilement departed, dust was dissolved, and the Dharma-eye became pure and clear. I became an Arhat, and the Tathagata personally sealed my realization and placed me among those beyond learning.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, turning back from flavor and returning to knowing is supreme."

Bhringiriti Vatsa rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"When I first brought forth the mind and entered the Way by following the Buddha, I often heard the Tathagata speak of the world as a place of suffering and no delight. While begging for food in the city, I was reflecting on the Dharma-gate and did not notice that a poisonous thorn on the road had pierced my foot. My whole body was seized with pain.

"I then reflected: there is a knowing that knows this deep pain. Although there is awareness that is aware of pain, within the pure, awakened mind there is no pain and no awareness of pain. I further considered, 'How can this one body have two kinds of awareness?' Before long, as I gathered in my thoughts, body and mind suddenly became empty. Within twenty-one days, all my outflows were exhausted, I became an Arhat, and received the Buddha's personal seal, manifesting the state beyond learning.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, pure awareness that leaves the body behind is supreme."

Subhuti rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"For countless kalpas my mind has been without obstruction. I can remember my births as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. From the very beginning, while still in my mother's womb, I already knew the stillness of emptiness. In this way, all the way to the emptiness of the ten directions, I was able to lead living beings to realize the nature of emptiness as well.

"The Tathagata caused me to awaken to the true emptiness of the nature of awareness. The nature of emptiness became perfectly bright, and I attained Arhatship. At once I entered the Tathagata's precious, luminous ocean of emptiness. Sharing the Buddha's knowing and seeing, I was sealed as one beyond learning. In liberation through the emptiness of nature, I am unsurpassed.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, all appearances entering into non-appearance, the objectless also being exhausted, and all dharmas turning back into the unconditioned—this is supreme."

Sariputra rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and

said to the Buddha:

“For countless kalpas my mind’s seeing has been pure. Thus, throughout births as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, all the various transformations of the worldly and the supramundane—once seen—were immediately understood, and I attained unobstructed penetration.

“On the road I encountered the Kasyapa brothers, going along together and proclaiming the teaching of causes and conditions. By hearing this, my mind awakened to boundlessness, and I left home to follow the Buddha. My seeing and awareness became bright and perfectly complete; I attained great fearlessness, became an Arhat, and became the Buddha’s eldest son—born from the Buddha’s mouth, transformed from the Dharma.

“If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, when the mind’s seeing gives forth light, and that light reaches the utmost of knowing and seeing, this is supreme.”

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha:

“I have, in ages past, served as a Dharma Prince under Tathagatas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. The Tathagatas of the ten directions instruct their disciples of Bodhisattva capacity to cultivate the conduct of Samantabhadra, and from me that name is established.

"World-Honored One, I use mind-hearing to distinguish the knowing and seeing of living beings. If, in some world beyond worlds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, there is even one being who in his mind brings forth the conduct of Samantabhadra, then at that very time I ride upon a six-tusked white elephant and, with hundreds of thousands of emanation-bodies, go to that place. Even if that being's obstructions are deep and he cannot yet see me, I secretly touch his crown, protect and comfort him, and enable him to accomplish his realization.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my own original cause is concerned, mind-hearing brought to light, with freedom in discernment, is supreme."

Sundarananda rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"When I first joined the Sangha and entered the Way under the Buddha, although I fully observed the precepts, my mind was always scattered and restless in samadhi, and I had not yet attained freedom from outflows. The World-Honored One instructed me, together with Kutila, to contemplate the whiteness at the tip of the nose.

"At first, I examined it closely for twenty-one days and saw the breath within the nose going in and out like smoke. Body and mind grew bright within; the world became perfectly open and transparent, everywhere empty and pure, like crystal. Gradually the appearance of smoke disappeared, and

the breath at the nose became white. My mind opened, my outflows were exhausted, and all the in-breath and out-breath were transformed into light, illuminating the worlds of the ten directions. I attained Arhatship, and the World-Honored One predicted that I would attain Bodhi.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, through dissolving the breath, and as the breath over time gave rise to illumination, so that illumination became full and extinguished the outflows—this is supreme."

Purna Maitrayaniputra rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"For countless kalpas my eloquence has been without obstruction. I have proclaimed suffering and emptiness and have deeply penetrated the true reality. And not only that: even the secret Dharma-gates of Tathagatas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, I have been able to set forth in subtle and wondrous ways before the assembly, without fear.

"The World-Honored One knew that I possessed great eloquence, and so, by means of the wheel of sound, instructed me to proclaim and unfold the Dharma. In the Buddha's presence I assisted him in turning the wheel. By expounding the Dharma like the lion's roar I became an Arhat. The World-Honored One sealed my realization and declared me unsurpassed in expounding the Dharma.

“If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, using the sound of Dharma to subdue the demons and enemies and to extinguish all outflows—this is supreme.”

Upali rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha:

“I personally followed the Buddha when he crossed beyond the city and left home. I personally witnessed the Tathagata’s six years of diligent hardship. I personally saw the Tathagata subdue the hosts of demons, subdue the various outsiders, and free himself from the worldly outflows of greed and desire.

“Receiving the Buddha’s teaching on the precepts, I kept them pure in every respect—from the three thousand deportments down to the eighty thousand subtle offences of nature and prohibition. Thus, body and mind became quiescent and extinguished, and I attained Arhatship. Among the Tathagata’s assembly I became the one who maintains the order of the Sangha. The Buddha personally sealed my mind, and among the assembly I was praised as unsurpassed in upholding the precepts and cultivating the body.

“If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, by taking hold of the body, the body attained freedom; then, step by step, by taking hold of the mind, the mind attained penetration. After that, body and mind alike became wholly unobstructed. This is supreme.”

Mahamaudgalyayana rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"When I was first on the road begging for food, I encountered the three Kasyapa brothers—Uruvilva, Gaya, and Nadi—who were proclaiming the Tathagata's profound teaching of causes and conditions. At once I brought forth the mind and attained great penetration. The Tathagata bestowed upon me the robe to wear, and my beard and hair fell away from themselves.

"I traveled throughout the ten directions without obstruction. My spiritual powers became manifest, and I was regarded as unsurpassed in them. I became an Arhat. Not only the World-Honored One, but also the Tathagatas of the ten directions, praised my spiritual powers as perfectly bright, pure, free, and fearless.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, I turned the still light of mind back upon itself and let it shine forth, just as muddy water, once left to settle, gradually becomes clear and pure. This is supreme."

Uchusma, before the Tathagata, joined his palms, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I often recall that in a distant kalpa long ago, my nature was full of lust and desire. Then a Buddha appeared in the world named Empty King, who taught that people of excessive lust are like a mass of fierce fire. He instructed me to contemplate

throughout the hundred bones, the four limbs, and all the currents of cold and heat. The spiritual light turned inward and gathered, and the heart of lust was transformed into the fire of wisdom. From that time onward, all Buddhas called me Fire-Head. By the power of the samadhi of fire-light, I became an Arhat. I brought forth a great vow: whenever Buddhas accomplish the Way, I become their guardian of strength, personally subduing demonic enemies.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, by truly contemplating the warm touch throughout body and mind as unhindered and flowing through all, until all outflows were extinguished and a great jewel-flame arose, I ascended to unsurpassed awakening. This is supreme."

Holding-Earth (Dharaṇīṃdhara) Bodhisattva rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I remember that in the past, when the Tathagata Universal Light appeared in the world, I was a bhiksu. At all the important roads, ferry crossings, fields, and narrow dangerous places, wherever there was something improper that hindered or harmed carts and horses, I would level and fill it in. Sometimes I made bridges; sometimes I carried sand and earth. In this way I labored diligently through the appearance of countless Buddhas in the world.

"Sometimes, in market places and crossroads, if beings needed help carrying things, I would carry them for them.

When I had brought them where they were going, I would set the burden down and leave, taking no payment. In the time when the Buddha Visvabhu was in the world, there was great famine. I carried loads for people, far or near, and took only a single coin. Sometimes ox-carts were trapped in mud, and by my spiritual power I would push the wheels and free them from their distress.

"At that time the king of the land invited the Buddha to a feast. I was leveling the ground there in preparation for the Buddha's arrival. The Tathagata Visvabhu touched my crown and said to me, 'Level the ground of the mind, and then the ground of the whole world will be level.' At once my mind opened. I saw that the fine particles of my own body were no different from all the particles that make up the world. The nature of particles does not touch or rub against one another; even swords and weapons do not truly come into contact.

"In the dharma-nature I awakened to the patience of the unborn and became an Arhat. Now, turning back my mind, I have entered the Bodhisattva stage. Hearing the Tathagatas proclaim the wondrous lotus-like ground of the Buddha's knowing and seeing, I was among the first to bear witness to it.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, by truly contemplating the two kinds of dust—the body and the world—as equal and without difference, seeing them as originally the Tathagata-store and only falsely manifest as dust, when the dust is

dissolved and wisdom becomes complete, the unsurpassed Way is accomplished. This is supreme."

Moonlight Youth rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I remember that in ages past, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, there appeared a Buddha in the world named Water-Heaven, who taught the Bodhisattvas to cultivate the contemplation of water and enter samadhi. I contemplated the water-nature within the body and saw that it is without mutual obstruction. Beginning with tears and saliva, I traced it through all bodily fluids— saliva, essence, blood, urine, and excrement—and saw that the whirling water-nature within the body is one and the same. Then I beheld the waters within my own body and the fragrant-water oceans in the floating-banner king lands outside the world and saw them as without difference.

"At that time, when I first accomplished this contemplation, I saw only the water and had not yet attained the state of no-body. Once, while I was a bhiksu sitting in meditation in my room, a disciple of mine looked through the window into the room and saw nothing there but clear water filling the whole room. Not understanding, the child took up a piece of tile and threw it into the water, striking the water and making a sound, then looked around and went away.

"After I emerged from samadhi, I suddenly felt pain in my heart, just as Sariputra once experienced harm from

a malignant spirit. I thought to myself, ‘Now that I have already attained the path of Arhatship and have long left the conditions of illness behind, why should I suddenly feel pain in my heart today? Could it be that I have regressed and lost my attainment?'" At that time the boy hurried to me and told me everything exactly as it had happened. I then said to him, ‘If you again see the water, you may open the door, enter into the water, and remove the tile.’ The boy followed my instruction. Later, when I entered samadhi again, he once more saw the water, with the tile plainly still there. He opened the door and removed it. When I later came out of samadhi, my body was as before.

“After encountering immeasurable Buddhas and finally coming before the Tathagata Mountain-Sea Sovereign of Freedom and Penetration, I then attained the state in which the body was forgotten. My nature joined true emptiness and became one with the fragrant-water oceans of the ten directions, without duality and without difference. Now, in the Tathagata’s presence, I bear the name Youth and have entered among the Bodhisattvas.

“If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, through the water-nature as one flavor flowing everywhere, I attained the patience of the unborn and perfected Bodhi. This is supreme.”

The Dharma Prince Crystal Light rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I remember that in a past age, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, there appeared a Buddha in the world named Immeasurable Sound. He instructed the Bodhisattvas in the wondrous brightness of original awakening and taught them to contemplate this world and the bodies of living beings as all being turned by the force of delusive karmic wind.

"At that time I contemplated the establishment of worlds, the movement of the world, the moving and resting of the body, and the stirring of thoughts in the mind. I saw that all movement is not two, but equal and without difference. I then fully realized that this whole nature of movement comes from nowhere and goes nowhere. The deluded beings of the ten directions, as numerous as dust motes, are all the same single falsehood. And so it is, even with all the beings in a great chiliocosm: they are like a hundred mosquitoes shut up in one vessel, buzzing and shrilling in frantic confusion within a tiny space.

"Not long after meeting that Buddha, I attained Forbearance of Non-Arising Dharmas. At that time my mind opened, and I beheld the land of the Buddha Akshobhya in the east, where I became a Dharma Prince and served the Buddhas of the ten directions. Body and mind gave forth light, clear through and unobstructed.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, by contemplating that the force of wind has no independent basis, I awakened the Bodhi-mind, entered samadhi, united with the Buddhas of the

ten directions, and transmitted the one wondrous mind. This is supreme."

Akasagarbha Bodhisattva rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"With the Tathagata Dipamkara, I attained the body of boundlessness. At that time, holding in my hand the jeweled pearls of the four great elements, I illumined Buddha-lands as numerous as motes of dust in the ten directions and transformed them into empty space. Again, within my own mind there appeared a great perfect mirror, from which there flowed ten kinds of subtle jewel-light, pouring throughout the ten directions to the very limit of space. All the kingly banner-lands entered into the mirror and then passed into my body. My body became identical with empty space and did not hinder anything. It was able to enter well into lands as small as dust motes, widely carrying out the Buddha's work, and so I attained great accord and freedom.

"This great spiritual power came from my truly contemplating the four great elements as without any independent basis, seeing the arising and ceasing of false thoughts, and realizing that empty space and Buddha-lands are originally the same. From bringing this sameness to light, I attained the patience of the unborn.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, by contemplating the boundlessness of empty space and entering samadhi, so that

wondrous power became perfectly bright and complete - this is supreme."

Maitreya Bodhisattva rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I remember that in ages past, through kalpas as numerous as motes of dust, there appeared a Buddha in the world named Sun-Moon-Lamp Radiance. Following that Buddha I joined the Sangha. Yet my mind was heavily attached to worldly reputation, and I delighted in associating with noble families.

"At that time, the World-Honored One taught me to cultivate the samadhi of Consciousness-Only and to enter samadhi. Through kalpas up to the present, by means of this samadhi, I have served Buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. My mind that sought worldly fame gradually came to rest and disappeared. When later the Buddha Burning Lamp appeared in the world, I then attained the unsurpassed, wondrous, perfectly complete samadhi of the consciousness-only practice. Thus, to the very limit of all the Tathagata lands in empty space, whether pure or defiled, existent or non-existent, all are manifestations transformed by my own mind.

"World-Honored One, because I fully understood in this way that all is Consciousness-Only, from the nature of consciousness there flowed forth immeasurable Tathagatas. Now I have received the prediction and am next in line to fill the Buddha-seat.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then, as far as my realization is concerned, by truly contemplating that the ten directions are only consciousness, so that the mind of consciousness became perfectly bright and entered perfected reality, far removed from dependent arising and imagined attachment, I attained the patience of the unborn. This is supreme."

Mahasthamaprapta, the Dharma Prince, together with his fifty-two Bodhisattva companions, rose from their seats, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"I remember that in the past, in kalpas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, there appeared a Buddha in the world named Immeasurable Light. In one kalpa there were twelve Tathagatas appearing one after another, and the last of them was named Surpassing Sun-and-Moon Light. That Buddha taught me the samadhi of Buddha-recollection:

'It is like two men: one constantly remembers, the other constantly forgets. Thus, even if they meet, it is as though they do not meet; even if they see one another, it is as though they do not see. But if the two remember one another, and that recollection becomes deep, then from life to life they will not be apart, like form and shadow. The Tathagatas of the ten directions are mindful of living beings as a mother is mindful of her child. If the child runs away, then even though the mother remembers, what can she do? But if the child remembers the mother just as the mother remembers the child, then through life after life they will not be far apart. If

the minds of living beings remember the Buddha and think on the Buddha, then now or in the future they will certainly see the Buddha. They will not be far from the Buddha, and without resorting to any other expedient means, their minds will open by themselves. It is like a man whose body becomes fragrant from being permeated with incense: this is called the adornment of fragrant light.'

"In my original causal ground, by means of the mind that recites the Buddha's name, I entered the patience of the unborn. Now in this world I convert and guide those who recite the Buddha's name and lead them back to the Pure Land.

"If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration, then I have no other choice: to gather in all six faculties, let pure mindfulness continue without break, and thereby attain samadhi—this is supreme."

VI

At that time, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, I remember that in the past, through countless kalpas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, there appeared in the world a Buddha named Avalokitesvara. Before that Buddha I brought forth the Bodhi-mind, and that Buddha taught me to enter samadhi through hearing, reflection, and cultivation.

"At first, within hearing, I entered the flow of Dharma-nature without being attached by the object. Once the object entered was stilled, the two appearances of movement and stillness no longer arose. In this way, step by step, the hearing and what was heard both came to an end. When hearing was exhausted, I did not abide there. Then awareness and what was aware became empty. When emptiness and awareness reached perfect fullness, what was empty and what was being emptied both vanished. Once arising and ceasing were extinguished, still extinction appeared before me.

"Suddenly I transcended both the worldly and the supramundane. In the ten directions all became perfectly bright, and I attained two supreme excellences:

"First, above, I united with the fundamentally wondrous awakened minds of all the Buddhas of the ten directions,

and with all Tathagatas I shared one and the same power of compassion.

"Second, below, I united with all beings in the Six Realms throughout the ten directions, and with all living beings I shared one and the same cry of compassion and longing."

"World-Honored One, because I made offerings to the Tathagata Avalokitesvara, that Tathagata transmitted to me the vajra samadhi of the illusory perfuming of hearing and the cultivation of hearing. And because I share the same power of compassion as the Tathagata, I am able to manifest thirty-two transformation-bodies (manifestations) and enter all lands.

"World-Honored One, if there are Bodhisattvas who enter samadhi, advance in the cultivation of the undefiled, and whose supreme understanding is on the verge of perfect completion, then I manifest a Buddha-body before them and expound Dharma for them, enabling them to attain liberation.

"If there are those still in training whose quiescent, wondrous brightness is becoming perfectly manifest, then I appear before them in the form of a Pratyekabuddha and expound Dharma for them, enabling them to attain liberation.

"If there are those still in training who have cut off the twelve links of Dependent Origination, so that when the links are severed their superior nature is becoming perfectly manifest, then I appear before them in the form of a Conditioned-Enlightened One and expound Dharma for them, enabling

them to attain liberation."

"If there are those still in training who have realized the emptiness of the Four Noble Truths, cultivate the Path, and enter extinction, so that their superior nature is becoming perfectly manifest, then I appear before them in the form of a Sravaka and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to attain liberation.

"If there are living beings who wish their minds to awaken clearly, who do not violate the dust of desire, and who seek purity in the body of desire, then I appear before them in the form of a Brahma King and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to attain liberation.

"If there are living beings who wish to become Lord of Heavens, and govern all the celestial beings, then I appear before them in the form of Śakro devānām indraḥ and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who desire freedom of body and wish to travel throughout the ten directions, then I appear before them in the form of Ishvara and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who desire freedom of body and wish to fly through empty space, then I appear before them in the form of **Maheśvara** and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who delight in commanding spirits and protecting the lands, then I appear before them in the form of a Heavenly Great General and speak Dharma for them, enabling them to accomplish this."

"If there are living beings who delight in ruling a world and protecting its inhabitants, then I appear before them in the form of a Four Heavenly King and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who desire birth in a heavenly palace and the power to command spirits and devas, then I appear before them in the form of a prince of the Four Heavenly Kings and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who delight in becoming a ruler among humans, then I appear before them in the form of a human king and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who delight in leading noble clans and being honored by the world, then I appear before them in the form of an elder and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who delight in refined discourse and in dwelling in purity by themselves, then I appear before them in the form of a layman and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are living beings who delight in governing lands and judging cities and districts, then I appear before them in the form of a minister or official and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are living beings who delight in various arts and calculations, and in using such skills to preserve and protect themselves, then I appear before them in the form of a Brahmin and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are men who delight in leaving home and upholding the precepts, then I appear before them in the form of a bhiksu and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.”

“If there are women who delight in leaving home and upholding the monastic precepts, then I appear before them in the form of a bhiksuni and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are men who delight in observing the five precepts, then I appear before them in the form of an upasaka and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are women who dwell by observing the five precepts, then I appear before them in the form of an upasika and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are women who establish themselves through the inner ordering of the household, and thereby cultivate family and nation, then I appear before them in the form of a queen, a noble wife, a titled lady, or a great matron, and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are living beings who do not wish to defile their male sexual organ, then I appear before them in the form of a virgin boy and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are maidens who delight in preserving their chastity and do not seek violation, then I appear before them in the form of a virgin girl and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are devas who wish to leave the condition of the devas, then I appear in the form of a deva and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are dragons who wish to leave the condition of dragons, then I appear in the form of a dragon and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are yakshas who wish to transcend their own kind, then I appear before them in the form of a yaksha and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

“If there are gandharvas who wish to be freed from their own kind, then I appear before them in the form of a gandharva

and preach the Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this."

"If there are asuras who delight in being freed from their own kind, then I appear before them in the form of an asura and speak Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are kinnaras who delight in being freed from their own kind, then I appear before them in the form of a kinnara and speak Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are mahoragas who delight in being freed from their own kind, then I appear before them in the form of a mahoraga and speak Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are living beings who delight in the human condition and cultivate the human path, then I appear in human form and speak Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"If there are non-human beings—whether with form or without form, whether with thought or without thought—who delight in crossing beyond their own kind, then I appear before them in whatever form is appropriate and speak Dharma to them, enabling them to accomplish this.

"This is what is called the wondrous and pure thirty-two corresponding incarnations that enter the lands. All of them are brought to fulfillment through the effortless and wondrous perfuming power of the samadhi of contemplation and

cultivation."

"World-Honored One, by means of this vajra samadhi of the effortless and wondrous perfuming power of contemplation and cultivation, I share the same compassionate regard with all beings of the ten directions, the three lifetimes (past, present, and future), and the six paths, I enable living beings to obtain from my body and mind fourteen kinds of fearless merit.

"First, because I do not myself contemplate sound, but rather contemplate the perception of the one who contemplates, I enable suffering beings in the ten directions, when they contemplate my sound, at once to gain release.

"Second, because knowing and seeing turn back to the source, I enable living beings, even if they enter a great fire, not to be burned.

"Third, because contemplation and hearing turn back to the source, I enable living beings, even if carried away by great waters, not to drown.

"Fourth, because false thoughts are cut off and the mind is free from killing and harm, I enable living beings, even if they enter the lands of ghosts, not to be harmed by ghosts.

"Fifth, because hearing is perfumed until it becomes pure hearing, and the six faculties are dissolved and return to one with sound-hearing, I enable living beings, when they

are about to be harmed, so that swords break into pieces, and weapons become like cutting water, or like blowing on light—their nature incapable of shaking or injuring.

"Sixth, because hearing is perfumed into pure brightness, and that brightness pervades the Dharma-realm, the natures of dark and hidden beings can no longer fully take hold. Thus, I enable living beings so that even though yakshas, rakshasas, kumbhanda ghosts, pishacas, putanas, and the like, come near them, the vicious are unable to see these people."

"Seventh, because the nature of sound is perfectly dissolved, and contemplation and hearing turn back inward, departing from all false dusts, I can enable living beings so that prisons, fetters, and chains cannot bind them.

"Eighth, because sound is extinguished and perfect hearing gives rise everywhere to the power of compassion, I can enable living beings, when passing along dangerous roads, so that robbers cannot plunder them.

"Ninth, because hearing is perfumed and separated from the dusts, so that forms cannot rob it away, I can enable all beings who are full of lust to become far removed from craving and desire.

"Tenth, because pure sound is without dust, and faculty and object are perfectly fused, with neither subject nor object to oppose one another, I can enable all beings who are full of anger and hatred to be freed from resentment and rage.

“Eleventh, because the dusts are dissolved and brightness turns back upon itself, so that body and mind throughout the Dharma-realm become like crystal, clear and unobstructed, I can enable all beings who are dull, dark, or obstructed in nature—even the icchantikas—to be forever freed from delusion and darkness.

“Twelfth, because form is dissolved and hearing returns, so that without moving from the bodhimanda I can enter the world without destroying the world, and can throughout the ten directions make offerings to Buddhas as numerous as dust motes, serving beside each Buddha as a Dharma Prince, I can enable childless beings throughout the Dharma-realm who wish for sons to give birth to boys endowed with blessings and wisdom.

“Thirteenth, because the six faculties are perfectly penetrated with one another, and bright wisdom and contemplation are also perfectly integrated into oneness, containing the worlds of the ten directions, establishing the great perfect mirror (wisdom) and the empty treasury of the Tathagata, and because I receive and uphold without loss the secret Dharma-gates of the Tathagatas as numerous as dust motes in the ten directions, I can enable childless beings throughout the Dharma-realm who wish for daughters to give birth to girls who are upright in appearance, endowed with blessings, gentle and compliant in nature, loved and respected by all.”

“Fourteenth, within this trichiliocosm, with its hundreds of millions of suns and moons, there are now dwelling in the

world Dharma Princes as numerous as sixty-two Ganges rivers, each cultivating the Dharma, setting forth models for others, and teaching living beings. In adapting to living beings, their skillful means and wisdom are each distinct.

"But because, from the root of perfect enlightenment which I attained, I have opened forth the wondrous gate of the ear, my body and mind thereafter subtly contain and pervade the Dharma-realm. Thus, I am able to cause living beings who uphold chanting my name, and those who together uphold the names of those sixty-two Ganges rivers of Dharma Princes, to gain exactly equal merit, without any difference at all.

"World-Honored One, upholding my single name is no different from upholding all those many names, because I have cultivated and attained true perfect penetration. This is called the fourteenth bestowal of the power of fearlessness, by which blessings are made complete for living beings."

"World-Honored One, because I have also attained this perfect penetration (enlightenment) and cultivated and realized the unsurpassed Way, I have further obtained four inconceivable, effortless, wondrous virtues.

"First, because when I first attained the wondrous hearing-mind, the very essence of mind left behind hearing, and seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing were no longer divided, but became one perfectly fused, pure, jewel-like awakening, therefore I am able to manifest many wondrous forms and speak boundless secret divine mantras. Among

them I may appear with one head, three heads, five heads, seven heads, nine heads, eleven heads, and so on, up to one hundred and eight heads, a thousand heads, ten thousand heads, and eighty-four thousand vajra heads. I may appear with two arms, four arms, six arms, eight arms, ten arms, twelve arms, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty, up to twenty-four, and so on up to one hundred and eight arms, a thousand arms, ten thousand arms, and eighty-four thousand mudra arms. I may also manifest with two eyes, three eyes, four eyes, nine eyes, and so on, up to one hundred and eight eyes, a thousand eyes, ten thousand eyes, and eighty-four thousand pure jewel-eyes. At times compassionate, at times awe-inspiring, at times in stillness, at times in wisdom—in all these ways I protect living beings and enable them to attain great freedom.

"Second, because by hearing and reflection I have gone beyond the six dusts (sense objects) so that they cannot obstruct me any more than sound can be stopped by a wall, therefore I have the wondrous power to manifest each and every form and recite each and every mantra; and by means of those forms and those mantras I can bestow fearlessness upon living beings. Therefore, throughout Buddha-lands as numerous as dust motes in the ten directions, all call me the Bestower of Fearlessness.

"Third, because I have cultivated the original, wondrous, perfectly penetrating, as well as pure root/faculties, in whatever worlds I travel I can cause living beings to give up their bodies and treasures in seeking my compassion.

“Fourth, because I have realized the Buddha-mind and borne witness to its ultimate completion, I am able to make offerings of various treasures to the Tathagatas of the ten directions, and also to the six-path beings throughout the Dharma-realm: those who seek a wife obtain a wife; those who seek a son obtain a son; those who seek samadhi obtain samadhi; those who seek long life obtain long life; and so on, until those who seek great Nirvana obtain great Nirvana.”

“If the Buddha now asks about perfect penetration (enlightenment), then, as far as my realization is concerned, through the samadhi of perfect illumination by way of the ear, with the mind becoming ease and free from bondage to conditions, and by entering the stream-characteristic, I attained samadhi and fulfilled Bodhi. This is supreme.

“World-Honored One, that Tathagata praised me for skillfully attaining the Dharma-gate of perfect penetration, and in the great assembly bestowed upon me the name Avalokitesvara. Because, through my contemplation and hearing, the ten directions became perfectly bright, the name Avalokitesvara is heard throughout the ten directions.”

At that time, the World-Honored One, seated on the Lion-Throne, emitted jewel-light simultaneously from all five parts of his body, and that light reached afar to bathe the crowns of the Tathagatas, Dharma Princes, and all the Bodhisattvas in worlds as numerous as dust motes in the ten directions. Those Tathagatas likewise emitted jewel-light from all five parts of their bodies, and from those dust-mote worlds the light came

to bathe the Buddha's head, and also the heads of all the great Bodhisattvas and Arhats in the assembly. Forests, trees, pools, and ponds all proclaimed Dharma-sounds. The interwoven lights crossed one another like a jeweled net. The whole assembly attained what they had never known before, and all at once universally obtained the Vajra Samadhi.

At that moment heavenly rain fell with lotus flowers of a hundred jewels, blue, yellow, red, and white, mingled in varied splendor. The empty space of the ten directions became the color of the seven jewels. In this Saha world, the great earth, mountains, and rivers all at once disappeared, and only the lands of the ten directions, as numerous as dust motes, appeared joined together as one single world. Brahma hymns and chants arose of themselves and were spontaneously sounded forth.

Then the Tathagata said to Manjushri, the Dharma Prince:

"You now behold these twenty-five great Bodhisattvas and Arhats beyond learning. Each has spoken of the skillful means by which he first accomplished the Way, and each has said that through cultivating true perfect penetrating wisdom he attained realization. In their practice, there is truly no superiority or inferiority, no earlier or later difference.

"But now I wish to bring Ananda to awakening. Among these twenty-five modes of practice, which is suited to his nature? And after my extinction, for living beings of this world who enter the Bodhisattva Vehicle and seek the unsurpassed

Way, by what gate of skillful means may they most easily accomplish realization?”

Manjushri, the Dharma Prince, receiving the Buddha’s compassionate command, at once rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and, relying on the Buddha’s majestic power, spoke these verses before the Buddha:

“The ocean of awakening, in nature clear and round,

In its round clarity the source of awakening is wondrous.

Original brightness, shining, gives rise to objects;

Once objects are set up, the shining nature is lost.

Deluded falsity gives rise to empty space;

Relying on space, the world is established.

Thought congeals into lands and realms;

Awareness and knowing become living beings.

Within great awakening, empty space arises

Like a single bubble on the sea.

Worlds with outflows, fine as motes of dust,

All arise from what is called empty space.

When the bubble is gone, space itself was never there;

How much less the three realms besides?

Returning to the source, the nature is not two;

Skillful means, however, have many doors.

The sage-nature is nowhere not penetrating;

Whether following or reversing, all are expedients.

But when a beginner first enters samadhi,

There are differences of slow and swift.

Form and thought bind and become dust;

The subtle knowing wisdom cannot be attained.

How could what is not bright and penetrating

Attain perfect penetration there?

Sound is mixed with spoken language,

Containing only the taste of names and phrases.

What is one-sided does not include the whole;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Fragrance is known only in contact;

Once apart, it is originally not there.

Its object of awareness is not constant;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Taste is not originally self-existent;

It exists only when flavor is present.

That awareness is not constant in one mode;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Touch is revealed only by what is touched;

Without an object, touch is not made known.

Contact and separation are not fixed in nature;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Dharmas are called the inner dust;

If one depends on dust, there must be an object.

Subject and object do not universally interpenetrate;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Though the seeing-nature may be clear and open,

It illumines the front but not the rear.

At the four sides it falls short by one half;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

The breath through the nose goes out and comes in,

But in the present there is no joining breath.

Fragmentary and discontinuous, it does not truly enter all;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

The tongue has no entrance of itself;

It gives rise to awareness because of flavor.

When flavor is gone, awareness is gone;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

The body and what is touched are alike;

Neither is the perfectly awakened contemplation.

Their boundaries do not secretly meet as one;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

The knowing faculty is mixed with scattered thought;

However still and clear, it finally has no true seeing.

Thoughts and concepts cannot be cast off there;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Consciousness and seeing are mixed with the threefold conjunction;

Trace them to the root, and they are said to be without fixed mark.

Its own substance is first of all unstable;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Mind-hearing penetrates the ten directions,

But it arises from the power of a great cause.

For beginners, it cannot readily be entered;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

The contemplation of the nose-tip was only a provisional device,

Useful merely to gather the mind and keep it still.

Once stillness is established, the mind rests on that stillness;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Expounding Dharma plays with sound and words;

Its first awakening depends on prior attainment.

Names and phrases are not themselves without outflows;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Keeping or breaking the precepts only restrains the body;

Without body, there is nothing to restrain.

It is not originally all-pervading;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Spiritual powers are fundamentally from past causes;

What have they to do with discrimination of the Dharma?

Mindfulness still depends on outward conditions;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

If one contemplates the nature of earth,

Its solidity and obstruction are not penetrating.

What is conditioned is not the holy nature;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

If one contemplates the nature of water,

Its thought and perception are not the real.

Thusness is not awakened by such observation;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

If one contemplates the nature of fire,

Disgust for existence is not true release.

It is not an expedient for the beginner;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

If one contemplates the nature of wind,

Movement and stillness still stand in opposition.

What stands opposed is not unsurpassed awakening;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

If one contemplates the nature of emptiness,

Dull obscurity comes first, not awakening.

No-awakening is different from Bodhi;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

If one contemplates the nature of consciousness,

That consciousness is not constant.

To preserve the mind there is already delusion;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

All conditioned activities are impermanent;

The nature of thought is originally arising and ceasing.

Cause and fruit here are of differing kinds;

How could perfect penetration be gained there?

Now I declare to the World-Honored One:

Since the Buddha appeared in the Saha world,

The true teaching-body in this land

Has its purity in sound and hearing.

If one wishes to take up samadhi,

In truth one must enter through hearing.

To leave suffering and attain liberation -

Excellent indeed is Avalokitesvara!

Through kalpas as many as the sands of the Ganges,

He entered Buddha-lands as fine as dust motes,

Attained the power of great freedom,

And bestowed fearlessness on living beings.

Wondrous Sound, Contemplator of the World's Sounds,

Brahma-Sound, Ocean-Tide Sound -

Saving the world and bringing all to peace,

Beyond the world, he attains the everlasting.

I now bow to the Tathagata

And follow what Avalokitesvara has declared.

It is like a man dwelling in stillness,

While drums are struck at once in all ten directions.

He hears them all at one and the same time -

This is true and real completeness.

The eye does not see beyond what blocks it;

The mouth and nose are likewise so.

The body knows only through contact;

The thoughts of the mind are confused and without order.

But when sound is heard beyond a wall,

Whether far or near, it can still be heard.

What the five faculties cannot equal -

This is true and real penetration.

The nature of sound is movement and stillness,

But within hearing there is no such coming and going.

When there is no sound, one says there is no hearing,

Yet truly hearing is not thereby without nature.

When sound is absent, hearing does not perish;

When sound is present, hearing is not thereby born.

When both arising and ceasing are perfectly transcended,

That is the true and constant reality.

Even when one is in dreams,

It is not because of non-thinking that hearing is absent.

Awakened contemplation stands beyond thought;

Body and mind cannot reach it.

Now in this Saha land,

Teachings are made clear by means of sound.

Living beings are deluded about their original hearing;

Following sound, they drift in saṃsāra.

Though Ananda's memory is strong,

He still could not avoid falling into mistaken thought.

Is it not because he followed what he sank into,

Instead of turning the flow back and gaining the unfalse?

Ananda, listen carefully!

I, upheld by the Buddha's power,

Now proclaim the Vajra King,

The wondrous, illusory, inconceivable,

The Buddha-Mother, the true samadhi.

You have heard the secret gates

Of Buddhas as numerous as dust motes;

But if the outflows are not first removed,

Stored-up hearing becomes a fault.

Using hearing to hold the Buddhas' teaching -

Why not instead hear your own hearing?

Hearing does not arise naturally of itself;

It takes its name because of sound.

When hearing turns back and is freed from sound,

Once freed, what name can still apply?

When one faculty has returned to the source,

The six faculties are all liberated.

Seeing and hearing are like illusory cataracts;

The three realms are like flowers in empty space.

When hearing turns back, the cataract-root is removed;

When the dust is gone, awakening becomes pure and whole.

At the utmost purity, light becomes penetrating;

Still illumination includes the empty sky.

Looking back then upon the world,

It is just like something seen in a dream.

Matangi is in the dream -

Who could then hold your form?

Like a skillful magician in the world,

Conjuring all manner of men and women -

Though the faculties seem to move,

It all depends on a single mechanism.

When that mechanism comes to rest and returns to stillness,

All illusions become without nature.

The six faculties are just the same:

Originally they depend upon one bright essence,

Which is divided and becomes six harmonized parts.

When one place returns to rest,

The functions of all six cannot continue.

Dust and defilement vanish in a single thought,

And what remains is perfect, bright, pure wonder.

As long as there is remaining dust, one is still in training;

When brightness reaches the ultimate, one is the Tathagata.

Great assembly and Ananda!

Turn back your inverted hearing-mechanism.

Return hearing to hear the self-nature;

When that nature is fulfilled, it is the unsurpassed Way.

Perfect penetration is truly just this.

This is the single road to Nirvana

For the Buddhas as numerous as dust motes.

The Tathagatas of the past

Accomplished realization by this gate;

The Bodhisattvas of the present

Now each enter this perfect brightness;

And those who study and practice in the future

Should rely upon this very Dharma.

I too was realized through this,

Not only Avalokitesvara alone.

Truly, just as the World-Honored One

Has asked me regarding skillful means,

To rescue beings in the final age

Who seek to leave the world,

And to bring to fulfillment the mind of Nirvana,

Avalokitesvara is the foremost.

As for all the other expedients,

They too are the Buddha's majestic power,

And according to circumstance may cast off dust and toil;

But they are not the way for long cultivation and study.

Though shallow and deep may all be spoken of as Dharma,

I bow to the Tathagata-store,

The undefiled, inconceivable.

May you now empower those of the future

So that they have no doubt about this gate.

It is a skillful means easy to accomplish;

It is fit to be taught to Ananda

And to those sunk and drowning in the final age.

If they but cultivate by this one faculty,

Its perfect penetration surpasses the rest.

The true mind is exactly thus."

Thereupon Ananda and the whole assembly became utterly clear in body and mind, and received great instruction. They beheld the Buddha's Bodhi and great Nirvana as though someone, having gone far from home on business and not yet returned, had at last clearly recognized the road by which he was to go home.

Throughout the whole assembly—among the devas, dragons, and the eightfold hosts, among those of the two vehicles still in training, and among all the newly awakened Bodhisattvas, in number altogether as many as ten Ganges rivers—all attained their original mind, became far removed from dust

and defilement, and obtained the purity of the Dharma-eye.

Bhiksuni Nature, upon hearing the verses, became an Arhat.

And immeasurable living beings all brought forth the mind of unsurpassed, equal, and right awakening.

Ananda adjusted his robes, and in the midst of the great assembly joined his palms and bowed at the Buddha's feet. His mind and understanding had become perfectly clear; sorrow and joy were mingled together within him. Wishing to benefit the beings of the future, he bowed his head and said to the Buddha:

"Greatly compassionate World-Honored One, I have now awakened to the Dharma-gate of becoming a Buddha, and in the practice within it I am free of doubt.

"I have often heard the Tathagata speak thus: 'One who has not yet crossed over, yet first vows to carry others across—this is the bringing forth of the Bodhisattva mind. One whose own awakening is already complete, and who is able to awaken others—this is the Tathagata's manifestation in the world.'

"Although I myself am not yet fully crossed over, I vow to carry across all living beings in the Dharma-Declining Age.

"World-Honored One, when these beings are farther and farther removed from the Buddha, evil teachers in numbers

like the sands of the Ganges will preach the Dharma. If they wish to gather in their minds and enter samadhi, how are they to establish a bodhimanda, remain far from demonic disturbances, and keep their Bodhi-mind from retreating?"

At that time, in the midst of the great assembly, the World-Honored One praised Ananda:

"Excellent, excellent! Just as you have asked—how to establish a bodhimanda and rescue living beings sinking in the final age—now listen carefully, and I shall explain it for you."

Ananda and the great assembly replied, "Yes indeed," and reverently received the teaching.

The Buddha said to Ananda:

"You have often heard me, within the Vinaya, proclaim the three decisive principles of cultivation. They are these: to arouse mindfulness is called precept; from precept is born samadhi; from samadhi is brought forth wisdom. These are what are called the three undefiled studies.

"Ananda, why do I say that arousing mindfulness is precept? If, among the beings of the six paths in all worlds, their minds are not lustful, then they will not continue in the succession of birth and death. You cultivate samadhi in order to go beyond the dusts of affliction. But if the mind of lust is not cut off, you cannot get beyond the dusts. Even if one has much

wisdom and dhyana concentration appears before him, if he does not cut off lust, he must fall into the path of demons—at the highest becoming a demon king, at the middle becoming a demon citizen, and at the lowest becoming a demon woman. Those demons too have their followers, and each claims for himself that he has accomplished the unsurpassed Way.

"After my passing, in the Dharma-Declining Age, there will be many such demonic beings prevailing blazingly in the world, widely practicing greed and lust, and pretending to be good spiritual mentors and thus causing living beings to fall into the pit of love and wrong views, and so lose the road to Bodhi.

"When you teach people of the world to cultivate samadhi, they must first cut off the lustful mind. This is the first decisive, pure, and clear instruction of the Tathagatas and the Buddhas of the past.

"Therefore, Ananda, if one does not cut off lust and yet cultivates dhyana samadhi, it is like steaming sand and stones in the hope that these sand and gravel will become rice. Even after hundreds of thousands of kalpas, the sands and gravel will remain nothing but hot sand. Why is this? Because they are not the root of rice; they are only sand and stone.

"If you use a lustful body to seek the wondrous fruit of Buddhahood, then even if you gain some wondrous awakening, it is all rooted in lust. And since the root is lust, you will fall into the recycle of the three evil paths and can

never get out. By what road, then, could the Tathagata's Nirvana be realized?

"You must cause the very mechanism of lust—body and mind alike—to be entirely cut off. When even the nature of cutting off is gone, only then may there be hope for the Buddha's Bodhi.

"What I say in this way is called the Buddha's teaching. To speak otherwise is the teaching of Papiyan."

"Ananda, again: if among the beings of the six paths in all worlds, their minds do not kill, then they will not continue in the succession of birth and death. You cultivate samadhi in order to transcend the dusts of affliction. But if the mind of killing is not cut off, you cannot get beyond the dusts of affliction and defilement. Even if one has much wisdom and dhyana concentration appears before him, if he does not cut off killing, he must fall into the path of spirits. Those of the highest grade become powerful ghosts. Those of the middle grade become flying yakshas, leaders of ghosts, and the like. Those of the lower grade become earth-walking rakshasas. Those ghosts and spirits too have their followers, and each one claims for himself that he has accomplished the unsurpassed Way.

"After my passing, in the Dharma-Declining Age, many such ghosts and spirits will blaze forth in the world, saying of themselves that by eating meat they have found the road to Bodhi.

"Ananda, I allowed bhiksus to eat the five kinds of clean (lifeless) meat. But that meat was all transformed by my spiritual power; it originally had no life-root. In your Brahmin lands the ground is much steaming and damp, mixed with sand and stone, so that grasses and vegetables do not grow. By the added power of my great compassion, I gave you something provisionally called meat, and thus you obtained its taste. But how can it be that after the Tathagata's extinction, people eat the flesh of living beings and still call themselves disciples of Shakya?

"You should know that such eaters of flesh, even if they obtain some opening of mind that resembles samadhi, are all great rakshasas. When their retribution is finished, they will surely sink into the bitter sea of birth and death. They are not disciples of the Buddha. Such people kill and devour one another, eat one another without end - how can such a person ever get out of the three realms?

"When you teach people of the world to cultivate samadhi, they must next cut off killing. This is the second decisive, pure, and clear instruction of the Tathagatas and the Buddhas of the past.

"Therefore, Ananda, if one does not cut off killing and yet cultivates dhyana samadhi, it is like a man who blocks his own ears and shouts loudly, hoping that others will not hear him. This is called hiding something while only making it more obvious.

“Pure bhiksus and all Bodhisattvas, even when walking along crossroads, do not trample living grass—how much less would they pull it up with their hands? How can one speak of great compassion and yet take the blood and flesh of living beings as food?

“If bhiksus do not wear silk, cotton, satin, leather boots, fur, or wool from the East, and do not consume milk, curds, or ghee from this land, then such bhiksus are truly liberated in the world. Having repaid their former debts, they will no longer roam in the three realms. Why? Because to make use of parts of another being’s body is to become bound by that being’s condition. It is like a man who eats the hundred grains growing in the earth—his feet cannot leave the ground.

“If body and mind alike do not wear or eat anything that belongs to living beings, whether body or bodily part, then I say such a person is truly liberated.

“What I say in this way is called the Buddha’s teaching. To speak otherwise is the teaching of Papiyan.”

“Ananda, again: if among the sentient beings of the six realms of transmigration in all worlds, the mind does not steal, then they will not follow the continuity of birth and death. You cultivate samadhi in order to leave the dusts of affliction; but if the mind of stealing is not cut off, the dusts cannot be left behind. Though one may possess much wisdom and though meditation appears before him, if stealing is not cut off, he will surely fall into deviant paths. Of the highest grade, he

becomes one among the spirit-essences; of the middle grade, one among uncanny and demonic beings; of the lowest grade, a deviant person possessed by various malignant spirits. These perverse beings also gather followers, and each claims for himself that he has accomplished the unsurpassed Way.

"After my passing, in the final Dharma age, many such uncanny beings will flourish in the world. Hidden and deceitful, they will call themselves good spiritual mentors. Each will say that he has attained the Dharma of the superior practitioners. They will delude the ignorant, frightening them into losing their right minds. Wherever they pass, the households there will be wasted and scattered.

"I instruct bhikshus to beg in order from place to place so that they may cast off greed and accomplish the Bodhi-way. The bhikshus do not cook for themselves. Sustaining this remaining life only as travelers lodging for a time in the three realms, they show but one passing coming and going—gone once, they do not return. How then can thieves put on my monastic robes, trade upon the teaching of Tathagata, commit all kinds of deeds, and still call it Buddha-Dharma? They are not true renunciants, nor precept-holding bhikshus. Instead, they slander the path of renunciation as a merely Lesser Vehicle. In this way they mislead immeasurable beings and cause them to fall into the Avici hell.

"If, after my extinction, there are bhikshus who with firm resolve cultivate samadhi, and who before an image of the Tathagata burn one lamp upon the body, burn one finger-joint,

or burn one stick of incense upon the body, then I say that such a person repays all beginningless old debts at once, takes leave of the world forever, and is eternally freed from all outflows. Though he may not yet clearly understand the road to unsurpassed awakening, in the Dharma his resolve is already settled. But if one is unwilling to relinquish even this small bodily cause, then even if he should attain the unconditioned, he must still return as a human to repay former debts—just as I repaid mine through eating horse grain.

"When you teach people of the world to cultivate samadhi, after that they must cut off stealing. This is the third decisive, pure, and luminous instruction of the Tathagatas and the Buddhas of former ages.

"Therefore, Ananda, if one does not cut off stealing and yet cultivates dhyana samadhi, it is like a man pouring water into a leaking vessel in the hope that it may be filled: though he should continue through kalpas as numerous as dust motes, in the end it will never become full.

"If bhikshus, apart from robe and bowl, store not even the smallest extra thing; if whatever remains from their alms-food is given to hungry beings; if in great assemblies they join their palms and bow to the multitude; if, when others strike or revile them, they receive it the same as praise; if they make both body and mind completely relinquished, so that even flesh, bones, and blood are shared with living beings; if they do not twist the Tathagata's provisional teachings into self-serving explanations, thereby misleading beginners—then the

Buddha seals such a one as having truly attained samadhi.

“What I thus say is called the Buddha’s teaching. To speak otherwise is the teaching of Mara.”

“Ananda, if among the beings of the six realms of transmigration in all worlds, though in body and mind they are free from killing, stealing, and lust, and these three modes of conduct are complete, yet they commit great false speech, then their samadhi will never become pure. They become demons of love and views and lose the seed of the Tathagata.

“What is meant is this: what they have not attained, they claim to have attained; what they have not realized, they say they have realized. Or, seeking honor and supremacy in the world, they say before others, ‘I have now attained the fruit of Stream-entry (Srota-apanna), the fruit of Once-returning, the fruit of Non-returning, the way of Arhatship, the vehicle of the Pratyekabuddha, or the various Bodhisattva stages before the ten bhumis.’ They do this in order to receive others’ reverence and repentance, greedy for offerings. This is icchantika: it destroys the Buddha-seed, just as a man with a knife cuts down a tala tree. The Buddha declares that such a person forever severs his good roots, will no longer possess right knowing and seeing, will sink into the three bitter seas, and will never accomplish samadhi.

“After my passing, I command all Bodhisattvas and Arhats that they should, by transformation-bodies, be born in that final Dharma age, taking on various forms to ferry across

those who still revolve in saṃsāra. They may appear as shramanas, white-robed lay people, human kings, ministers, boys, girls, and even as prostitutes, widows, cheats, thieves, butchers, or merchants. Working together with such beings, they will praise the Buddha-Vehicle and lead their bodies and minds into samadhi. Yet they will never openly say, 'I am truly a Bodhisattva,' or 'I am truly an Arhat.' They will never reveal the Buddha's hidden causes and lightly speak of them to those still in training. Only at the end of life, and in secret, may they leave a final instruction. How then could such a one confuse living beings by committing great false speech?

"When you teach people of the world to cultivate samadhi, after that they must cut off all great false speech. This is the fourth decisive, pure, and luminous instruction of the Tathagatas and the Buddhas of former ages.

"Therefore, Ananda, if one does not cut off great false speech and yet cultivates dhyana samadhi, it is like carving human excrement into the shape of sandalwood and hoping for fragrance—there can be no such thing. I teach bhiksus that the bodhimanda is the pure mind per se. In all four deportments and every act of conduct, there must be no falseness at all. How then can one claim to have attained the Dharma of a superior person?

"It is like a poor man falsely calling himself an emperor: he only brings destruction upon himself. How much more when one falsely steals the title of the Dharma King! If the causal basis is not true, the fruit will be crooked and twisted. To seek

the Buddha's Bodhi in this way is like a man biting his own navel and asking who can make it accomplished.

"If bhiksus make their minds as straight as a taut string, are true in all things, and enter samadhi, then they will forever be free from demonic disturbances. I seal such a person as one who will accomplish the unsurpassed knowing and awakening of a Bodhisattva.

"What I say in this way is called the Buddha's teaching. To speak otherwise is the teaching of Mara."

VII

“Ananda, you asked about gathering in the mind. I have now first explained that, in entering samadhi, cultivating the wondrous gate, and seeking the Bodhisattva path, one must first uphold these four kinds of discipline, pure and sharp like ice and frost. Then no branches and leaves can grow from them. When the three precepts corresponding to the mind and the four precepts corresponding to the mouth no longer arise, the cause of their arising is gone.

“Ananda, if these four things are not lost, then the mind will no longer run after form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. If so, how could any demonic disturbance arise?

“But if there are habitual tendencies from the past that cannot yet be destroyed, then you should teach such a person to single-mindedly recite my unsurpassed spiritual mantra of the Buddha’s crown of light—the Mahasattva Usnisha Sitatapatra. This is the mind-mantra spoken from the crown of the Tathagata’s invisible summit-mark, from the unconditioned Buddha-mind, shining forth as he sits upon the jeweled lotus.

“Consider your own case: through life after life, you and Matangi were bound together by karmic conditions and habits of love and desire, not merely for one life or one kalpa. Yet with but one proclamation from me, her lustful mind was forever cut off, and she became an Arhat. She had been only a

courtesan, without any mind for cultivation, yet by the unseen aid of the spiritual power she swiftly attained the state beyond learning. How much more should you, the Hearers here in the assembly, who seek the Highest Vehicle and who are determined to become Buddhas, succeed without difficulty? It would be like raising dust into a following wind - what hardship could there be?

"If, in the Dharma-Declining Age, there are those who wish to practice cultivation in a bodhimanda, they must first uphold the pure prohibitory precepts of a bhiksu. They must choose a foremost shramana whose precepts are pure and make him their teacher. If they do not encounter a truly pure monk, then their observance of the disciplinary rules will certainly not be accomplished.

"After the precepts are established, they should put on fresh, clean robes, burn incense, dwell in quiet seclusion, and recite this mind-mantra spoken by the Buddha-mind one hundred and eight times. Then, they should establish the boundary and set up the bodhimanda and seek the presently abiding unsurpassed Tathagatas in the lands of the ten directions, so that they may shine forth great compassionate light and come to anoint the crown of their heads.

"Ananda, such pure bhiksus in the final age—or bhiksunis, or white-robed donors and lay devotees—if their minds extinguish greed and lust and they uphold the Buddha's pure precepts, and in the bodhimanda they bring forth the vow of a Bodhisattva, bathing on entering and leaving, practicing

the Way during the six periods day and night, and remaining without sleep for twenty-one days, then I myself will appear before them, touch their crowns, comfort them, and enable them to awaken."

Ananda said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, I have received the Tathagata's unsurpassed compassionate instruction, and my mind is now opened in understanding. I know for myself that through cultivation and realization the path beyond learning may be accomplished. But when, in the final age, one cultivates and establishes a bodhimanda, how is the boundary to be set? And in what way may it accord with the pure rule and pattern of the World-Honored One?"

The Buddha said to Ananda:

"If, in the Dharma-Declining Age, a person wishes to establish a bodhimanda, he should first obtain a great white ox from the Snow Mountains, one that feeds on the rich, fragrant grasses of those mountains and drinks only the pure water of the Snow Mountains. Its dung is fine and delicate. Take that dung, mix it with sandalwood, and use it to plaster the ground. If the ox is not from the Snow Mountains, then its dung is foul and impure and cannot be used to coat the ground.

"Elsewhere, on level ground, dig away the surface earth to a depth of five feet, and take the yellow soil beneath. Mix into

it sandalwood, aloeswood, sumu, frankincense, turmeric, white gum, aquilaria, zero-ling, spikenard, and clove-scent. Pulverize these ten into a fine powder. Mix the powder with the earth to make a paste and plaster the bodhimanda floor with it.

"Make the altar sixteen cubits across, square and round, and form it into an eight-cornered platform. At the center of the altar place a lotus made of gold, silver, copper, or wood. In the lotus set a bowl. In the bowl first place dew water gathered in the eighth month. Into the water place whatever flower petals are available. Take eight round mirrors and set one in each direction, surrounding the lotus and bowl. Outside the mirrors erect sixteen lotuses. Arrange sixteen incense burners among the lotuses. Adorn the incense burners, burning only aloeswood so that no flame is visible.

"Take white cow's milk and place it in sixteen vessels. Also prepare cakes fried in milk, various sugars, oil-cakes, milk porridge, sumu, honeyed ginger, pure ghee, and pure honey. Set these, sixteen by sixteen, surrounding the lotuses, to make offerings to the Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas. At each mealtime, or at midnight, take half a sheng of honey and three he of ghee. In front of the altar set a small fire brazier. With the fragrance called touloupo, boil perfumed water and use it to bathe the charcoal. Kindle it until it burns fiercely. Then pour the ghee and honey into the blazing brazier and burn them away completely as an offering to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

“Around the outside, hang banners and flowers everywhere. Within the altar room, arrange upon the four walls the images of the Tathagatas of the ten directions and of all the Bodhisattvas. In the principal place should be displayed Vairocana, Shakyamuni, Maitreya, Amitabha, and the many transformed forms of Avalokitesvara, together with Vajragarbha placed at their sides. Sakra, Brahma, Ucchusma, Nilakantha, the various Kundalis, Bhrkuti, the Four Heavenly Kings, and Vinayaka should be set at the doorway, arranged on the left and right. Again take eight mirrors and hang them above in empty space, so that they face the mirrors already set in the altar, and their images and reflections interpenetrate layer upon layer.

“During the first seven days, with utmost sincerity bow to the Tathagatas of the ten directions, to the great Bodhisattvas, and to the Arhats, reciting their names. Constantly, in the six periods of day and night, recite the mantra while circling the altar and walking the Way with utmost single-mindedness. At each session, always perform one hundred and eight recitations.

“During the second seven days, direct the mind wholly and exclusively to the Bodhisattva vow, without interruption. In my Vinaya there is already instruction on vows.

“During the third seven days, throughout the twelve periods of the day and night, devote yourself entirely to holding the Buddha’s Sitātapatrā mantra. On the seventh day, the Tathagatas of the ten directions will all appear at once. At

the place where the mirrors' lights intercross, they will touch the crown of your head. Then, in that bodhimanda, cultivate samadhi. This can cause such practitioners in the final age to have bodies and minds clear and pure like crystal.

"Ananda, if such pure bhiksus in the Dharma-Declining Age—or bhiksunis, or white-robed patrons and lay followers—extinguish greed and lust in their minds, uphold the Buddha's pure precepts, bring forth the Bodhisattva vow in the bodhimanda, bathe when entering and leaving, and practice the Way in the six periods without sleep, through three sets of seven days, then I myself will appear before them, touch their crowns, comfort them, and enable them to awaken.

"If among the bhiksus who first gave them the precepts, or among the ten bhiksus present together, there is even one who is not pure, then such a bodhimanda will in most cases not succeed.

"After the three sets of seven days, they should sit upright and dwell in stillness for a hundred days. Those of sharp faculties, without rising from their seats, may attain the fruit of Stream-entry. Even if body and mind have not yet realized the holy fruit, they will know with certainty that their becoming a Buddha is no error.

"You asked about the bodhimanda. It is to be established in this way."

Ananda bowed at the Buddha's feet and said to the Buddha:

"From the time I joined the Sangha, I relied upon the Buddha's special kindness and affection. Because I sought much hearing, I had not yet realized the unconditioned. Thus, I fell under the spell of that Brahma-heaven sorcery: though my mind was clear and understood, my power was not my own. I was only able to gain release because Manjushri came to rescue me.

"Although I received the hidden aid of the Tathagata's Buddha-Crown spiritual mantra, I have still not yet heard it with my own ears. I only pray that, in great compassion, you will proclaim it once more, to rescue with pity the cultivators in this assembly, and also those who in the future remain in saṃsāra, so that by receiving the Buddha's secret sound, their body and mind may be set free."

At that time, all the great assembly everywhere bowed in reverence and waited to hear the Tathagata's secret, sacred phrases.

Then the World-Honored One, from the fleshy protuberance on his head, sent forth a hundred-jeweled light. Within that light there sprang forth a thousand-petaled jeweled lotus. A transformation Buddha sat within the jeweled flower. From his Ushnisha head he emitted ten streams of hundred-jeweled radiance. In each and every ray there appeared Vajra Secret-Traces as numerous as ten Ganges rivers, holding mountains and lifting vajras, filling the whole realm of empty space.

The great assembly looked upward in awe. Fear and love were mingled together in their hearts. They sought the Buddha's compassionate protection and, with single-minded attention, listened as the Tathagata of the invisible crown-mark, releasing light, prepared to proclaim the sacred mantra:

Nan Mo Sa Da Ta Su Jia Duo Ye A La He Di San Miao San Pu Tuo Xie（1）。

Sa Da Ta Fo Tuo Ju Zhi Se Ni Shan（2）。

Nan Mo Sa Po Bo Tuo Bo Di Sa Duo Pi Bi（3）。

Nan Mo Sa Duo Nan San Miao San Pu Tuo Ju Zhi Nan（4）。

Suo She La Po Jia Seng Qie Nan（5）。

Nan Mo Lu Ji A Luo Han Dai Nan（6）。

Nan Mo Su Lu Duo Bo Na Nan（7）。

Nan Mo Suo Jie Li Tuo Qie Mi Nan（8）。

Nan Mo Lu Ji San Miao Qie Duo Nan（9）。

San Miao Qie Bo La Di Bo Duo Na Nan（10）。

Nan Mo Ti Po Li She Nan（11）。

Nan Mo Xi Tuo Ye Pi Di Ye Tuo Luo Li She Nan（12）。

She Bo Nu Jie La He Suo He Suo La Mo Ta Nan（13）。

Nan Mo Ba La He Mo Ni（14）。

Nan Mo Yin Tuo Luo Ye（15）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（16）。

Lu Tuo La Ye（17）。

Wu Mo Buo Di（18）。

Suo Xi Ye Ye（19）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（20）。

Na La Ye Na Ye（21）。

Pan Zhe Mo He San Mu Tuo La（22）。

Nan Mo Xi Jie Li Duo Ye（23）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（24）。

Mo He Jia La Ye（25）。

Di Li Buo La Na Qie La（26）。

Pi Tuo La Bo Na Jia La Ye（27）。

A Di Mu Di（28）。

Shi Mo She Na Ni Po Xi Ni（29）。

Mo Da Li Qie Na（30）。

Nan Mo Xi Jie Li Duo Ye（31）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（32）。

Duo Ta Qia Dai Ju La Ye（33）。

Nan Mo Buo Tou Mo Ju La Ye（34）。

Nan Mo Ba She La Ju La Ye（35）。

Nan Mo Mo Ni Ju La Ye（36）。

Nan Mo Qie She Ju La Ye（37）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（38）。

Di Li Cha Shu La Xi Na（39）。

Bo La He La Na La She Ye（40）。

Duo Ta Qie Duo Ye（41）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（42）。

Nan Mo A Mi Duo Po Ye（43）。

Duo Ta Qie Duo Ye（44）。

A La He Di（45）。

San Miao San Pu Tuo Ye（46）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（47）。

A Chu Pi Ye（48）。

Duo Ta Qia Duo Ye（49）。

A La He Di（50）。

San Miao San Pu Tuo Ye（51）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（52）。

Pi Sha She Ye Ju Lu Fei Zhu Li Ye（53）。

Buo La Po La She Ye（54）。

Duo Ta Qie Duo Ye（55）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（56）。

San Bu Shi Bi Duo（57）。

Sa Lian Na La La She Ye（58）。

Duo Ta Qie Duo Ye（59）。

A La He Di（60）。

San Miao San Pu Tuo Ye（61）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（62）。

She Ji Ye Mu Na Yi（63）。

Duo Ta Qie Duo Ye（64）。

A La He Di（65）。

San Miao San Pu Tuo Ye（66）。

Nan Mo Po Qie Po Di（67）。

La Da Na Ji Du La She Ye（68）。

Duo Ta Qie Duo Ye（69）。

A La He Di（70）。

San Miao San Pu Tuo Ye（71）。

Di Piao Nan Mo Sa Jie Li Duo（72）。

Yi Tan Po Qie Po Duo （73）。

Sa Da Ta Qie Du She Ni Shan （74）。

Sa Da Duo Buo Da Lan （75）。

Nan Mo A Po La Shi Dan （76）。

Buo La Di Yang Qi La （77）。

Sa La Po Bu Duo Jie La He （78）。

Ni Jie La He Jie Jia La He Ni （79）。

Ba La Bi Di Ye Chi Tuo Ni （80）。

A Jia La Mi Li Zhu （81）。

Buo Li Da La Ye Ning Jie Li （82）。

Sa La Po Pan Tuo Na Mu Cha Ni （83）。

Sa La Po Tu Se Zha （84）。

Tu Xi Fa Buo Na Ni Fa La Ni （85）。

Zhe Du La Shi Di Nan （86）。

Jie La He Suo He Sa La Ruo She （87）。

Pi Duo Beng Sa Na Jie Li（88）。

A Se Zha Bing She Di Nan（89）。

Na Cha Cha Da La Ruo She（90）。

Bo La Sa Tuo Na Jie Li（91）。

A Se Zha Nan（92）。

Mo He Jie La He Ruo She（93）。

Pi Duo Beng Sa Na Jie Li（94）。

Sa Po She Du Lu Ni Po La Ruo She（95）。

Hu Lan Tu Xi Fa Nan Zhe Na She Ni（96）。

Bi Sha She Xi Da La（97）。

A Ji Ni Wu Tuo Jia La Ruo She（98）。

A Ban La Shi Duo Ju La（99）。

Mo He Buo La Zhan Chi（100）。

Mo He Die Duo（101）。

Mo He Di She（102）。

Mo He Shui Duo She Po La（103）。

Mo He Ba La Pan Tuo La Po Xi Ni（104）。

A Li Ye Duo La（105）。

Pi Li Ju Zhi（106）。

Shi Po Pi She Ye（107）。

Ba She La Mo Li Di（108）。

Pi She Lu Duo（109）。

Bo Teng Wang Jia（110）。

Ba Du Luo Zhi He Na A Zhe（111）。

Mo Luo Zhi Po Ban Luo Zhi Duo（112）。

Ba She La Shan Chi（113）。

Pi She La Zhe（114）。

Shan Duo She Pi Ti Po Bu Shi Duo（115）。

Su Mo Lu Bo（116）。

Mo He Shui Duo（117）。

A Li Ye Duo La（118）。

Mo He Po La A Buo La（119）。

Ba She La Shang Jie La Zhi Po（120）。

Ba She La Ju Mo Li（121）。

Ju Lan Tuo Li（122）。

Ba She La He Sa Duo Zhe（123）。

Pi Di Ye Qian Zhe Na Mo Li Jia（124）。

Hu Su Mu Po Jie La Duo Na（125）。

Pi Lu Zhe Na Ju Li Ye（126）。

Ye La Tu Se Ni Shan（127）。

Pi Zhe Lan Po Mo Ni Zhe（128）。

Ba She La Jia Na Jia Bo La Po（129）。

Lu She Na Ba She La Dun Zhi Zhe（130）。

Shui Duo Zhe Jia Mo La（131）。

Cha She Shi Bo La Po（132）。

Yi Di Yi Di（133）。

Mu Tuo La Jie Na（134）。

Suo Pi La Chan（135）。

Jue Fan Du（136）。

Yin Tu Na Mo Mo Xie（137）。

Wu Xin（138）。

Li Se Jie Na（139）。

Buo La She Xi Duo（140）。

Sa Da Ta Qie Du Se Ni Shan（141）。

Hu Xin（142）。

Du Lu Yong（143）。

Zhan Po Na（144）。

Hu Xin（145）。

Du Lu Yong（146）。

Xi Dan Po Na（147）。

Hu Xin（148）。

Du Lu Yong（149）。

Bo La Se Di Ye San Buo Cha Na Jie La（150）。

Hu Xin（151）。

Du Lu Yong（152）。

Sa Po Yao Cha He La Cha Suo（153）。

Jie La He Ruo She（154）。

Pi Teng Beng Sa Na Jie La（155）。

Hu Xin（156）。

Du Lu Yong（157）。

Zhe Du La Shi Di Nan（158）。

Jie La He Suo He Sa La Nan（159）。

Pi Teng Beng Sa Na La（160）。

Hu Xin（161）。

Du Lu Yong（162）。

La Cha（163）。

Po Qie Fan（164）。

Sa Da Ta Qie Du Se Ni Shan（165）。

Bo La Dian She Ji Li（166）。

Mo He Suo He Sa La（167）。

Bo Shu Suo He Sa La Shi Li Sha（168）。

Ju Zhi Suo He Sa Ni Di Li（169）。

A Bi Ti Shi Po Li Duo（170）。

Zha Zha Ying Jia（171）。

Mo He Ba She Lu Tuo La（172）。

Di Li Pu Po Na（173）。

Man Cha La（174）。

Wu Xin（175）。

Sha Xi Di Bo Po Du（176）。

Mo Mo（177）。

Yin Tu Na Mo Mo Xie（178）。

La She Po Ye（179）。

Zhu La Ba Ye（180）。

A Zhi Ni Po Ye（181）。

Wu Tuo Jia Po Ye（182）。

Pi Sha Po Ye（183）。

She Sa Duo La Po Ye（184）。

Po La Zuo Jie La Po Ye（185）。

Tu Se Cha Po Ye（186）。

A She Ni Po Ye（187）。

A Jia La Mi Li Zhu Po Ye（188）。

Tuo La Ni Bu Mi Jian Bo Qie Bo Tuo Po Ye（189）。

Wu La Jia Po Duo Po Ye（190）。

La She Tan Cha Po Ye（191）。

Na Qie Po Ye（192）。

Pi Tiao Da Po Ye（193）。

Su Bo La Na Po Ye（194）。

Yao Cha Jie La He（195）。

Luo Cha Si Jie La He（196）。

Bi Li Duo Jie La He（197）。

Pi She Zhe Jie La He（198）。

Bu Duo Jie La He（199）。

Jiu Pan Cha Jie La He（200）。

Bu Dan Na Jie La He（201）。

Jia Zha Bu Dan Na Jie La He（202）。

Xi Gan Du Jie La He（203）。

A Bo Xi Mo La Jie La He（204）。

Wu Tan Mo Tuo Jie La He（205）。

Che Ye Jie La He（206）。

Xi Li Po Di Jie La He（207）。

She Duo He Li Nan（208）。

Jie Po He Li Nan（209）。

Lu Di La He Li Nan（210）。

Mang Suo He Li Nan（211）。

Mi Tuo He Li Nan（212）。

Mo She He Li Nan（213）。

She Duo He Li Nu（214）。

Shi Bi Duo He Li Nan（215）。

Pi Duo He Li Nan（216）。

Po Duo He Li Nan（217）。

A Shu Zhe He Li Nu（218）。

Zhi Duo He Li Nu（219）。

Di Shan Sa Bing Shan（220）。

Sa Po Jie La He Nan（221）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（222）。

Ji La Ye Mi （223）。

Bo Li Ba La Zhe Jia Qi Li Dan （224）。

Pi Tuo Ye Du Chen Tuo Ye Mi （225）。

Ji La Ye Mi （226）。

Cha Yan Ni Qi Li Dan （227）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi （228）。

Ji La Ye Mi （229）。

Mo He Buo Shu Buo Da Ye （230）。

Lu Tuo La Qi Li Dan （231）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi （232）。

Ji La Ye Mi （233）。

Na La Ye Na Qi Li Dan （234）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi （235）。

Ji La Ye Mi （236）。

Da Duo Qie Lu Cha Xi Qi Li Dan （237）。

Pi Tuo Ye Du Chen Tuo Ye Mi（238）。

Ji Luo Ye Mi（239）。

Mo He Jia La Mo Da Li Jia Na Qi Li Dan（240）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（241）。

Ji La Ye Mi（242）。

Jia Po Li Jia Qi Li Dan（243）。

Pi Tuo Ye Du Chen Tuo Ye Mi（244）。

Ji La Ye Mi（245）。

She Ye Jie La Mo Du Jie La（246）。

Sa Po La Ta Suo Da Na Qi Li Dan（247）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（248）。

Ji La Ye Mi（249）。

Zhe Duo La Po Qi Ni Qi Li Dan（250）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（251）。

Ji La Ye Mi（252）。

Pi Li Yang Qi Li Zhi（253）。

Nan Tuo Ji Sha La Qie Na Buo Di（254）。

Suo Xi Ye Qi Li Dan（255）。

Pi Tuo Ye Du Chen Tuo Ye Mi（256）。

Ji La Ye Mi（257）。

Na Jie Na She La Po Na Qi Li Dan（258）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（259）。

Ji La Ye Mi（260）。

A Luo Han Qi Li Dan Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（261）。

Ji La Ye Mi（262）。

Pi Duo La Qie Qi Li Dan（263）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（264）。

Ji La Ye Mi Ba She La Bo Ni（265）。

Ju Xi Ye Ju Xi Ye（266）。

Jia Di Buo Di Qi Li Dan（267）。

Pi Tuo Ye She Chen Tuo Ye Mi（268）。

Ji La Ye Mi（269）。

La Cha Wang（270）。

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“Ananda, this radiant cluster from the Buddha’s head—the Sitātapatrā, the secret gāthā, the wondrous and subtle sacred phrases—gives birth to all the Buddhas of the ten directions.

“By means of this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions attain unsurpassed, right, and universal awakening.

“By holding this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten

directions subdue all demons and control all non-Buddhist paths.

“By riding on this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions sit upon jeweled lotus flowers and respond in lands as numerous as dust motes.

“By containing this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions turn the great Dharma-wheel in worlds as numerous as dust motes.

“By upholding this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions are able in all directions to touch the head and bestow predictions. Even before their own fruit is complete, they also receive the Buddhas’ prediction throughout the ten directions.

“Relying on this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions are able throughout the ten directions to rescue and save all suffering beings: those in hells, hungry ghosts, animals, the blind, the deaf, the mute, those suffering from meeting with what they hate, separation from what they love, failing to obtain what they seek, and the blazing burden of the five skandhas. Great and small calamities alike are at once brought to release. Robbers’ dangers, warfare, kings’ (legal) punishments, imprisonment, disasters caused by wind, fire, flood, hunger, thirst, and poverty are all dispelled in a single thought.

“Following this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten

directions are able throughout the ten directions to serve good spiritual mentors and make offerings with proper acts as wished. In the assemblies of Tathagatas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, they are praised as great Dharma Princes.

“Practicing this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions are able throughout the ten directions to gather in those of near affinity, so that those of the Lesser Vehicle, hearing the teaching from the secret treasury, do not give rise to fear.

“By reciting this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions accomplish unsurpassed awakening, sit beneath the Bodhi tree, and enter great Nirvana.

“By transmitting this mantra-heart, the Tathagatas of the ten directions, after their extinction, entrust the affairs of the Buddha-Dharma, abiding in it to the very end and purifying the Vinaya, so that all is made pure.

“If I were to speak of this Buddha-head radiant cluster, the Pāṇḍara mantra, from dawn until dusk, with sounds linked continuously, and with the syllables and phrases never repeated, then even through kalpas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges I could never come to the end of it.

“This mantra is also called the Tathagata’s Head.

“You who are still in training, who have not yet brought an

end to saṃsāra, and who with utmost sincerity aspire to attain Arhatship—if you do not uphold this mantra, and yet sit in a bodhimanda hoping that body and mind will remain far from demonic disturbances, there can be no such thing."

"Ananda, in whatever world, among whatever beings of that land, if they write out this mantra upon whatever materials are produced there—birch bark, palm leaves, paper, plain silk, or white cloth—and place it in a fragrant pouch, then even if that person is dull of mind and unable to recite it or remember it, whether he carries it upon his body or keeps it within his dwelling, you should know that throughout the whole of his life all poisons will be unable to harm him."

"Ananda, I now further explain this mantra for you, so that it may protect the world, bestow great fearlessness, and bring living beings to the wisdom that transcends the world.

"After my passing, in the final age, if living beings can recite it themselves, or teach others to recite it, you should know that such beings who recite and uphold it cannot be burned by fire, cannot be drowned by water, and cannot be harmed by great poisons or small poisons. Likewise, even heavenly beings, dragons, ghosts, spirits, uncanny beings, and demonic apparitions, together with all evil spells, will be unable to attach to them. Their minds will enter right concentration.

"All curses, sorceries, poisonous drugs, metallic poisons, and the poisonous vapors of grasses, trees, insects, snakes, and all things—if they enter the mouth of such a person, they are

transformed into the taste of sweet dew.

“All evil stars and all ghosts and spirits that delight in harming others with malignant hearts are unable to raise evil against such a person. Even the evil ghost kings Vinayaka and all their retinues, having received deep grace, will constantly come and guard and protect him.”

“Ananda, you should know that this mantra is constantly accompanied by eighty-four thousand nayutas of Ganges-river kotis of Vajra Treasury King Bodhisattva lineages, and every single one of them has hosts of vajra beings as retinues, attending day and night.

“Suppose there is a living being who, in a scattered mind and not yet in samadhi, nevertheless remembers it in the mind and holds it with the mouth. These Vajra Kings will always follow and protect that good man. How much more so one whose Bodhi-mind is firmly resolved! These Vajra Treasury King Bodhisattvas, with concentrated and swift spiritual power, will awaken that person’s divine consciousness. At that very time his mind will be able to remember and know, without doubt, the events of eighty-four thousand Ganges-river sands of kalpas.

“From upholding this mantra in his first life onward, and through every later birth, he will not be born in places of evil such as yakshas, rakshasas, putanas, kataputanas, kumbhandas, pishacas, or the various hungry ghosts, whether with form or without form, whether with thought or without

thought.

“If such a good man reads it, recites it, writes it, copies it, carries it, stores it, or makes offerings to it in many ways, then through kalpa after kalpa he will not be born in poverty, lowliness, or any place that is hard to endure.

“These living beings, even if they themselves perform no deeds of merit, receive from the Tathagatas of the ten directions all their merits. Because of this, through Ganges-river sands of asamkhyeya, unspeakable and inconceivable kalpas, they will always be born in one place together with the Buddhas. Their immeasurable merits, like a cluster of evilaksha fruits gathered together, will be cultivated in one place and will never be scattered apart.

“Therefore, it can cause those who have broken the precepts to have their root of precepts made pure. Those who have not yet received the precepts can be caused to receive them. Those who are not yet vigorous can be caused to gain vigor. Those without wisdom can be caused to gain wisdom. Those who are impure can quickly become pure. Those who do not keep the fasts and precepts can, by themselves, come to uphold the fasts and precepts.”

“Ananda, when such a good man upholds this mantra, even if before receiving it he had violated the prohibitions, then after upholding the mantra all the sins of broken precepts, whether light or heavy, are at once wiped away.

“Even if he has drunk alcohol, eaten the five pungent plants, or been involved in various impurities, all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vajra gods, heavenly beings, immortals, ghosts, and spirits will not count it as a fault against him. Even if he wears soiled, torn, or worn-out clothing, in all his walking and dwelling he is still reckoned as pure.

“Even if he does not construct the altar, does not enter the bodhimanda, and does not formally perform the practice of the Way, yet if he recites and upholds this mantra, the merit is still the same as entering the altar and practicing within it—there is no difference.

“Even if he has committed the five evil acts leading to uninterrupted hell, or the four pārājikas of bhiksus, or the eight grave defeats of bhiksunis, once he has recited this mantra, such heavy karma is like a pile of sand scattered by a fierce wind: it is all blown away, and not even a trace remains.”

“Ananda, if there are living beings who, from immeasurable and countless kalpas past, still carry all manner of light and heavy karmic obstructions from previous lives and have not yet had the chance to repent of them—if they can read this mantra, recite it, write it out, carry it on their bodies, or install it in their dwelling, house, garden, or hall—then such accumulated karma will melt away like snow in hot water. Before long, they will all attain awakening to the patience of the unborn.

"Furthermore, Ananda, if there is a woman who has not yet borne sons or daughters and wishes for children, then if she can, with utmost sincerity, keep this mantra in mind, or carry this Sitātapatrā on her body, she will give birth to sons or daughters endowed with blessings and wisdom. One who seeks long life will obtain long life. One who seeks that his karmic rewards may quickly become complete will quickly obtain fulfillment. The same is true for bodily life, complexion, and strength.

"After death, such a person may be born, according to vow, in any of the lands of the ten directions. He will certainly not be born in borderlands where the Triple Jewel is unknown, lowly stations, or degraded forms—how much less in mixed or monstrous births."

Ānanda, if in any kingdoms, provinces, counties, towns, or villages there are famines and pestilences, or again warfare, bandit calamities, and strife, together with any other places afflicted by misfortune and disaster, then if this sacred mantra is copied out and placed at the four gates of the city, as well as at the various caityas, or upon banners, and if all the beings in that land receive this mantra with reverence, bow to it respectfully, and make offerings to it with single-minded devotion; and if the people each wear it upon their bodies, or place it within their homes or upon the ground where they dwell, then all calamities and disasters will be entirely extinguished.

Ānanda, in every place and every land where living beings

have this mantra, the devas and dragons will rejoice, the wind and rain will come in due season, the five grains will flourish in abundance, and the people will dwell in peace and happiness. It will also suppress all baleful stars and every strange portent arising in any direction. Disasters and obstructions will not arise. People will not meet untimely deaths. Shackles, fetters, and chains will not fasten upon their bodies. By day and by night they will sleep in peace and will constantly be free from evil dreams.

"Ananda, in this Saha world there are eighty-four thousand baleful stars that bring calamities and strange disasters. Among them, twenty-eight great evil stars are chief, and above these there are again eight great evil stars as their lords. When they appear in the world in various forms, they can bring forth all manner of disasters and strange afflictions for living beings. But wherever this mantra is present, all such things are entirely extinguished. For twelve yojanas around, the place becomes a sealed and bounded ground into which no evil omen or baleful portent can ever enter.

"Therefore, the Tathagata proclaims this mantra in order, in future ages, to protect beginners and all cultivators of samadhi. Thus, they may enter samadhi with body and mind peaceful and secure, obtaining great safety and ease, without any further disturbance from demons, ghosts, spirits, or from ancient resentments, old karmic wrongs, and past debts that come to trouble and torment them.

"You and those in the assembly who are still in training,

and also all future cultivators, if they rely upon my altar-ground, uphold the precepts in accordance with the Dharma, meet with a pure Sangha as their precept-teacher, uphold this mantra-heart, and do not give rise to doubt or regret—then, even if such a good man has not yet attained the power of mind-penetration in this body born of father and mother, the Tathagatas of the ten directions would be false speakers if he did not in the end accomplish it."

You're right. Here is the passage in English only.

After the Buddha had spoken these words, immeasurable hundreds of thousands of Vajra beings in the assembly all at once joined their palms, bowed before the Buddha, and said:

"As the Buddha has declared, we shall with utmost sincerity protect all such cultivators of Bodhi."

Then Brahma Kings, Sakra, and the Four Heavenly Kings also bowed together before the Buddha and said:

"If there are indeed such good people cultivating in this way, we shall with all our hearts and with utmost sincerity protect them, and cause whatever they undertake in this life to be fulfilled as they wish."

Then again immeasurable yaksha generals, rakshasa kings, putana kings, kumbhanda kings, pishaca kings, Vinayakas, all the great ghost kings, and the various ghost leaders also joined their palms and bowed before the Buddha, saying:

"We too vow to protect and uphold such people, so that their Bodhi-mind may swiftly come to full perfection."

Then immeasurable devaputras of the sun and moon, the lords of wind, rain, clouds, thunder, lightning, the officers who oversee the seasons and the years, and the retinues of the stars also bowed at the Buddha's feet in the assembly and said:

"We too shall protect these cultivators, establish their bodhimanda, and cause them to dwell without fear."

Then again immeasurable mountain gods, sea gods, all earth spirits, all beings that move on water, land, and through the air, the numinous essences of all things, together with the king of wind-spirits and the devas of the formless realm, all together bowed before the Tathagata and said:

"We too shall protect these cultivators, so that they may accomplish Bodhi and forever be free from demonic disturbances."

At that time, eighty-four thousand nayutas of Ganges-river sands of kotis of Vajra Treasury King Bodhisattvas rose from their seats in the great assembly, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One, as for us, the merit of our cultivation long ago fulfilled Bodhi, and yet we do not enter Nirvana. We constantly follow this mantra in order to rescue and protect those in the final age who rightly cultivate samadhi.

“World-Honored One, if there are those who cultivate the mind and seek right concentration—whether they are in the bodhimanda, or walking elsewhere, or even with a scattered mind moving through villages and towns—our retinues shall always follow them and stand guard around them. Even if the demon king or Mahesvara were to seek some opportunity against them, in the end they would find none. All lesser ghosts and spirits must remain ten yojanas away from such a good person—unless they themselves have brought forth the mind and delight in cultivating dhyana.

“World-Honored One, if such evil demons or their retinues should wish to come and trouble this good person, I shall smash their heads with my jeweled vajra pestle until they are like dust motes. I shall always cause whatever such a person undertakes to be fulfilled according to his wish.”

Ānanda at once rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha’s feet, and said to the Buddha:

“We are dull and slow-witted, fond of much learning, yet with minds still subject to outflows we have not sought true release. Now, receiving the Buddha’s compassionate instruction, we have gained the right permeation in cultivation; body and mind are at ease, and we have obtained great benefit.

“World-Honored One, in such cultivation and realization of the Buddha’s samādhi, before reaching Nirvāṇa, what is called the Ground of Dry Wisdom? What are the forty-four

minds? Through what successive stages does one obtain the titles of cultivation and practice? By arriving at what level is one said to have entered the grounds? And what is meant by a Bodhisattva of Equal Enlightenment?"

Having spoken thus, he prostrated himself with all five parts of his body to the ground. The whole assembly, single-mindedly waiting for the Buddha's compassionate voice, gazed upward in attentive expectancy.

At that time the World-Honored One praised Ananda, saying:

"Excellent, excellent! You have been able, on behalf of the whole assembly and of all living beings in the Dharma-Declining Age who cultivate samadhi and seek the Great Vehicle, to ask about the unsurpassed and proper path of cultivation, from the state of ordinary beings all the way to great Nirvana. Now listen carefully, and I shall explain it for you."

Ananda and the whole assembly joined their palms, emptied their hearts, and silently received the teaching.

The Buddha said:

"Ananda, you should know that the wondrous nature is perfectly bright and complete, apart from all names and appearances. Originally there are no worlds and no living beings. Because of delusion there is arising; because of arising there is ceasing. Arising and ceasing are called

delusion. The extinction of delusion is called truth. This is what is called the Tathagata's unsurpassed Bodhi and great Nirvana—the two names of the turning of the basis.

"Ananda, if you now wish to cultivate true samadhi and go straight to the Tathagata's great Nirvana, you must first recognize these two causes of inversion/delusion of living beings in this world. When inversion no longer arises, this itself is the Tathagata's true samadhi.

"Ananda, what is meant by the inversion of living beings?

"Because the luminous nature of mind is, by nature, bright and complete, there arises a false urge to illuminate it, and from that false illuminating, false seeing is born. From what in the end has no being, there comes to seem to be a final existence. That which is thus possessed of existence has no true cause, no real basis. The appearances of dwelling and of what is dwelt in have no root at all. Upon this original groundlessness are established the world and all living beings.

"Deluded about the original, perfect brightness, this gives rise to falsehood. The false nature has no substance and does not truly rest on anything. Yet when one seeks to return to the true, the very intention to make true what one seeks has already departed from the true and such nature. Seeking the true by means of what is not true, one merely completes what is not real. Sentient beings do not realize originally all dharmas are neither born nor abiding, neither mind nor dharma, unfolds and gives rise further and further. The force

of becoming gives rise to manifestation; perfuming turns it into karma; shared karma gives mutual response; and from responsive karma, extinction and arising appear one after the other. For this reason, there is the inversion of living beings.

"Ananda, what is meant by the inversion of the world?

"From that seeming existence there arises segmented and deluded birth; because of this, boundaries are established and the idea of 'world' arises. From what is neither true cause nor true abiding, there is movement and flowing without rest; because of this, time is established and the idea of 'age' or 'period' arises. The three periods and the four directions intermix and interrelate, and from their transformations living beings become divided into twelve kinds.

"Therefore, in the world, from movement there is sound; from sound there is form; from form there is smell; from smell there is touch; from touch there is taste; from taste there is dharma. Because these six disordered false thoughts become the nature of karma, the twelve divisions revolve by means of them. Thus, the world's sound, smell, taste, and touch, traced to their utmost through twelve transformations, return in a single revolving cycle. Riding on this revolving inverted appearance, there arise in the world beings born from eggs, from wombs, from moisture, and by transformation; beings with form, without form, with thought, without thought; beings not wholly with form, not wholly without form, not wholly with thought, and not wholly without thought.

"Ananda, because in the world there is false revolving in emptiness and motion, and because of the inversion of movement, there is the joining of energies that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of flying and sinking disordered thoughts. Thus, there are egg-born beings, coursing through lands and realms—fish, birds, turtles, snakes, and the like, filling their kinds.

"Because in the world there is mixed and defiled revolving, and because of the inversion of desire, there is the joining of moisture that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of horizontal and vertical disordered thoughts. Thus, there are womb-born beings, coursing through lands and realms—humans, animals, dragons, immortals, and the like, filling their kinds.

"Because in the world there is revolving through attachment, and because of the inversion of grasping, there is the joining of warmth that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of turning-over and turning-back disordered thoughts. Thus, there are moisture-born beings, coursing through lands and realms—those that wriggle, creep, and crawl, filling their kinds.

"Because in the world there is revolving through change and transformation, and because of the inversion of falsity, there is the joining of touch that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of old-and-new disordered thoughts. Thus, there are transformation-born beings, coursing through lands and realms—those that metamorphose, molt, or fly, filling their

kinds.

“Because in the world there is revolving through obstruction and lingering, and because of the inversion of hindrance, there is the joining of attachment that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of refined and shining disordered thoughts. Thus, there are beings with form, coursing through lands and realms—auspicious and inauspicious essences, bright spirits, and the like, filling their kinds.

“Because in the world there is revolving through dissipation and disappearance, and because of the inversion of delusion, there is the joining of darkness that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of hidden and obscure disordered thoughts. Thus, there are formless beings, coursing through lands and realms—dispersed in emptiness, dissolving and sinking, filling their kinds.

“Because in the world there is revolving through shadowy and dim appearances, and because of the inversion of reflection, there is the joining of memory that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of latent and knotted disordered thoughts. Thus, there are beings with thought, coursing through lands and realms—spirits, ghosts, and subtle essences, filling their kinds.

“Because in the world there is revolving through dullness and stupidity, and because of the inversion of ignorance, there is the joining of obstinacy that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of dried-up and withered disordered thoughts. Thus,

there are beings without thought, coursing through lands and realms—where spirit and consciousness turn into earth, wood, metal, or stone, filling their kinds.

"Because in the world there is revolving through mutual dependence, and because of the inversion of falsity, there is the joining of defilement that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of dependent disordered thoughts. Thus, there are beings not wholly with form, who take on formed states, coursing through lands and realms—such as jellyfish, which take shrimps for their eyes—filling their kinds.

"Because in the world there is revolving through mutual attraction, and because of the inversion of nature, there is the joining of spells and incantation that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of summoning and calling disordered thoughts. Thus, there are beings not wholly without form, who take on formless states, coursing through lands and realms—such as those born from curses and imprecations—filling their kinds.

"Because in the world there is revolving through compounded delusion, and because of the inversion of deception, there is the joining of difference that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of mutual exchange and alternation of disordered thoughts. Thus, there are beings not wholly with thought, who take on thought-forms like kalala, coursing through lands and realms—such as the pulu and others, which are formed from different substances joined together—filling their kinds.

“Because in the world there is revolving through resentment and harm, and because of the inversion of killing, there is the joining of monstrousness that becomes eighty-four thousand kinds of thoughts that feed on father and mother. Thus, there are sentient beings not wholly without thought, who take on thoughtless forms, coursing through lands and realms—such as the owl that takes a clod for its young, or the break-mirror bird that takes the fruit of poisonous trees as its offspring. When the young grow up, the father and mother are both eaten by them. Such kinds fill the world.

“These are what are called the twelve kinds of living beings.”

VIII

Ānanda, within each and every class of beings, there are likewise twelve kinds of inversion/delusion. They are like the scattered flowers that seem to appear when one presses upon the eyes. In this way, within the wondrous, perfect, true, pure, and luminous mind, there arise such empty and delusive confused imaginings through inversion.

Now, as you cultivate and realize the Buddha's samādhi, you must, regarding these original causes of disordered false thinking, establish three gradual stages. Only thus can they be removed. It is like cleansing a pure vessel that has held poisoned honey: first one removes the poison, then washes the vessel with hot water mixed with ash and fragrant substances, and only afterward stores ambrosia within it.

What are these three gradual stages?

First, through cultivation, one removes the supporting causes.

Second, through true cultivation, one cuts out the intrinsically evil karma.

Third, through further advance, one goes against manifest karma.

What are the supporting causes?

Ānanda, among the twelve classes of beings in this world, nobody can sustain themselves independently; they all survive by relying on four kinds of nourishment. These are: nourishment by material foods, nourishment by contact, nourishment by thought, and nourishment by consciousness. Therefore, the Buddha says that all beings live by relying on food.

Ānanda, all beings live because they take in what is nourishing and die because they take in what is poisonous. Therefore, if these beings seek samādhi, they must cut off the five pungent plants of the world. When these five pungent things are eaten cooked, they arouse lust; when eaten raw, they increase anger.

If people in this world eat these pungent things, then even though they may be able to expound the twelve divisions of the scriptures, the heavenly immortals of the ten directions will detest their foul odor and keep far away from them. Various hungry ghosts, however, will gather because of what they eat and lick their lips and mouths. Such a person will constantly dwell among ghosts. His blessings and virtue will daily diminish, and he will gain no benefit for long.

When one who eats these pungent things tries to cultivate samādhi, bodhisattvas, heavenly immortals, and the good spirits of the ten directions will not come to guard and protect him. Powerful demon-kings will seize the opportunity, appearing in the form of Buddhas to preach Dharma to him, slandering the precepts and praising lust, anger, and delusion.

At the end of his life, he himself will become a retainer of the demon-kings. When the blessings of the demons are exhausted, he will fall into the Avīci Hell.

Ānanda, one who cultivates bodhi must forever cut off the five pungent plants. This is called the first progressive stage of cultivation and advancement.

What is meant by the intrinsically evil root?

Ānanda, when such beings enter samādhi, they must first strictly uphold pure precepts. They must forever sever lustful thoughts. They must not partake of alcohol or meat. Whatever they eat should be purified by fire; they must not consume raw living matter.

Ānanda, if a practitioner does not cut off lust and killing, there is no possibility that he can ever transcend the three realms.

He should regard lust as he would a poisonous snake and see it as he would an enemy or a bandit. First, he upholds the cardinal four and eight śrāvaka precepts, restraining the body so that it does not act. After that, he cultivates the pure disciplinary conduct of a bodhisattva, restraining the mind so that no deluded thought arises.

When the prohibitions and precepts are accomplished, then in the world there will forever cease the karma of beings giving birth to one another and killing one another. Acts of stealing

and robbery will not be carried out. There will be no mutual entanglements of debt, and in the world one will no longer need to repay old obligations.

When such a pure person cultivates samādhi, then even with the fleshly body received from father and mother, and without needing the heavenly eye, he will naturally behold the worlds of the ten directions. He will see Buddhas, hear the Dharma, and personally receive the holy instruction. He will gain great spiritual powers and travel throughout the realms of the ten directions. His knowledge of past lives will become pure, and he will meet with no peril. This is called the second progressive stage of cultivation and advancement.

What is meant by manifest karma?

Ānanda, when one who is pure and upholds the precepts has no greed or lust in the mind, then with regard to the six external objects of sense, he will be no longer indulged in and strays among them. Because his heart does not run outward, it turns back and returns to the source. Once the sense-objects are no longer pursued, the faculties have nothing with which to join. Reversing the outward flow, all becomes one, and the six sensory functions no longer operate.

Then the lands of the ten directions become bright and utterly pure like a clear crystal within which a bright moon is suspended. Body and mind become serene and at ease; in wondrous perfection and equality one attains great peace and security. The secret, perfect, pure, and subtle wonder of all

Thus-Come Ones appears entirely within it.

Such a person immediately attains the forbearance of the non-arising of dharmas. From there he continues to cultivate gradually, and according to whatever practices unfold, the holy stages are established. This is called the third progressive stage of cultivation and advancement.

Ānanda, this good man has dried up the cravings of desire and attachment. The faculties and their objects no longer join one another. Though a residual body still remains before him, it will not continue into further birth. The mind he holds is empty and bright and is pure wisdom. The nature of this wisdom is luminous and complete, shining throughout the worlds of the ten directions. Though there is wisdom there, it is still dry; this is called the Ground of Dry Wisdom.

The habits of desire have only just dried up; he has not yet come into union with the flowing stream of the Thus Come One's Dharma. Yet with this very mind he flows inward, again and again, and perfect subtlety begins to unfold. From true, wondrous perfection, true wonder arises once more. Wondrous faith abides constantly. All false thoughts are extinguished, leaving nothing behind. The Middle Way is purely true. This is called the Abiding of Faith.

When true faith is made clear, all becomes perfectly unobstructed. The three—skandhas, sense-fields, and sense-realms—can no longer be hindrances. Thus, even throughout countless kalpas of past and future, all the habits from casting

off one body and receiving another appear before him. This good man can remember them all and forgets nothing. This is called the Abiding of Mindfulness.

Wondrous perfection is pure and true. True essence gives rise to transformation. Beginningless habitual tendencies are penetrated by one essential brightness. By this essential brightness alone he advances toward true purity. This is called the Mind of Vigor.

When this refined mind stands forth before him, it is wholly wisdom. This is called the Abiding of Wisdom.

He upholds and maintains the light of wisdom. It pervades all in still clarity. Stillness and subtlety remain ever settled. This is called the Abiding of Samādhi.

The light of samādhi shines forth. The luminous nature enters ever more deeply. There is only advance, never retreat. This is called the Mind of Non-Retreat.

As the mind advances, it rests securely, preserved without loss. It comes into communion with the vital current of the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions. This is called the Mind that Protects the Dharma.

Awakened brightness is preserved, and by subtle power he turns the Buddha's compassionate light back toward the Buddha and abides securely in it. It is like two mirrors facing one another, their lights shining face to face, with wondrous

images entering one another and layer upon layer. This is called the Mind of Turning Back and Dedication.

The light of the mind turns back in secret depth and receives the Buddha's ever-abiding, unsurpassed, subtle purity. He abides in the unconditioned and loses nothing. This is called the Abiding of the Mind of Precepts.

Abiding in precepts, he is at ease and free. He can travel throughout the ten directions, going wherever his vows lead him. This is called the Abiding of the Mind of Vows.

Ānanda, this good man, by means of true skillful methods, brings forth these ten minds. The essence of his mind emits radiance; the ten functions interpenetrate and are gathered into one perfect mind. This is called the Abiding of Bringing Forth the Mind.

Within the mind, brightness shines forth, like pure gold appearing within clear crystal. Taking that former subtle mind, he treads upon it and makes it the ground. This is called the Abiding of Cultivating the Ground.

As the ground of mind enters into knowing, both are fully illumined and understood. He travels throughout the ten directions and encounters no obstruction. This is called the Abiding of Cultivation.

His practice becomes one with that of the Buddhas, and he receives a share of the Buddha's vital current. Like the

intermediate-body that seeks out its parents, through hidden trust and unseen communion he enters the lineage of the Thus Come Ones. This is called the Abiding of Noble Birth.

Having already entered the womb of the Way, he personally attends the heirs of enlightenment. It is like a fetus already formed, with the human features complete and lacking nothing. This is called the Abiding of Full Skillful Means.

His appearance is like that of a Buddha, and the marks of his mind are likewise the same. This is called the Abiding of the Right Mind.

Body and mind are joined in completion and grow day by day. This is called the Abiding of Non-Retreat.

The numinous marks of the ten bodies are at once fully complete. This is called the Abiding of Pure Innocence.

The form is complete and comes forth from the womb; he becomes in person a son of the Buddha. This is called the Abiding of the Dharma-Prince.

This marks his coming into full maturity, just as a great king entrusts the affairs of state to the crown prince. When the royal son of a kṣatriya king has grown to maturity, he is ceremonially anointed upon the crown. This is called the Abiding of Crown Anointing.

Ānanda, when this good man has already become a son of the

Buddha and is endowed with immeasurable subtle virtues of the Thus Come One, he accords with all in the ten directions. This is called the Practice of Joy.

He is well able to benefit all living beings. This is called the Practice of Benefiting.

He enlightens himself and enlightens others, and in so doing encounters no opposition or refusal. This is called the Practice of No Hatred.

All kinds of expressions are brought forth, reaching to the very limits of future time. The three times are equal, and the ten directions are fully penetrated. This is called the Practice of Inexhaustibility.

All are brought into accord, and among the many Dharma-gates there is no error or confusion. This is called the Practice Free from Delusion.

Then, within what is the same, he reveals the many forms of difference; and in each and every distinct form, each in turn sees what is the same. This is called the Practice of Skillful Manifestation.

So it is even to the point that, if the ten directions of empty space were filled with dust motes, within each and every mote the worlds of the ten directions would appear. Dust appears, worlds appear, and yet they do not obstruct one another. This is called the Practice of Non-Attachment.

All manner of things appear before him, and all of them are the supreme pāramitā. This is called the Practice of Reverence.

In such perfect interpenetration and harmony, he is able to fulfill the standards and model of all Buddhas in the ten directions. This is called the Practice of Good Dharma.

Each and every thing is pure and without outflows, one in truth and unconditioned, because its nature is originally so. This is called the Practice of Reality.

Ānanda, this good man has perfected spiritual powers and fulfilled the work of the Buddha. Pure, spotless, and essentially true, he is far removed from all lingering faults. When he is about to deliver living beings across, he extinguishes even the mark of delivering them across. He turns the mind of the unconditioned toward the road of Nirvāṇa. This is called the Transference of Rescuing and Protecting All Beings while Leaving the Mark of Beings Behind.

He destroys what can be destroyed and departs even from all notions of departure. This is called the Indestructible Transference.

Original enlightenment is deep and still. His awakening is equal to the awakening of the Buddhas. This is called the Transference Equal to All Buddhas.

Essential truth shines forth in clarity, and his ground is like the ground of the Buddhas. This is called the Transference Reaching All Places.

Worlds and Thus Come Ones mutually interpenetrate one another, without obstruction. This is called the Transference of the Treasury of Inexhaustible Merit.

Within the same Buddha-ground, each ground gives rise to pure causes. Relying on those causes, they unfold and proceed toward the path of Nirvāṇa. This is called the Transference of Following the Equal Good Roots.

Once the true roots are brought to completion, all beings in the ten directions are none other than my own original nature. When this nature is brought to perfect fulfillment, beings are not lost. This is called the Transference of Following the Equal Contemplation of All Beings.

That is, one is identical with all dharmas and yet apart from all marks. In both identity and separation, there is no attachment. This is called the Transference of the Aspect of True Suchness.

One truly attains that which is Thus, and in the ten directions there is no obstruction. This is called the Transference of Unfettered Liberation.

The virtues inherent in the nature are brought to perfect completion, and all measure within the Dharma-

realm disappears. This is called the Transference of the Measurelessness of the Dharma-realm.

Ānanda, this good man has brought all the forty-one minds to purity. Next, he accomplishes the four wondrous and perfect stages of supplementary practice.

He then takes the Buddha's enlightenment and uses it as his own mind. It is as though it were about to emerge yet has not quite emerged. It is like drilling for fire, wishing to ignite the wood. This is called the Realm of Warmth.

Again, he takes his own mind and makes it that upon which the Buddha treads. It is as though there were reliance, and yet not reliance. It is like climbing a high mountain: the body has entered into empty space, yet below there is still a slight obstruction. This is called the Ground of Supporting.

Mind and Buddha have become alike, and he is skillful in attaining the Middle Way. It is like a person bearing something in patience—neither holding it in, nor letting it out. This is called Ground of Forbearance. All reckonings and measures of his heart are extinguished. Delusion and enlightenment, and even the Middle Way, are no longer objects that can be pointed to. This is called the Highest Ground in the World.

Ānanda, this good man, with regard to great Bodhi, attains penetrating understanding. His awakening corresponds to the Thus Come One, and he reaches the full extent of the

Buddha's domain. This is called the Ground of Joy.

What is different enters into sameness, and sameness itself is also extinguished. This is called the Ground of Freedom from Defilement.

When purity reaches its utmost, light arises. This is called the Ground of Radiance.

When light reaches its utmost, awakening is fulfilled. This is called the Ground of Blazing Wisdom.

It is a state to which neither sameness nor difference can attain. This is called the Ground Hard to Conquer.

The unconditioned nature of True Suchness is purely and luminously revealed. This is called the Ground of Manifest Presence.

He reaches the utmost limit of True Suchness. This is called the Ground of Far-Going.

There is one mind of True Suchness. This is called the Ground of Immovability.

The function of True Suchness is brought forth. This is called the Ground of Good Wisdom.

Ānanda, from this point onward, these Bodhisattvas have completed their cultivation, and their merit and virtue are

brought to fullness. Therefore, from this ground onward it is also called the Stage of Cultivation Fulfilled.

Compassionate shade and wondrous clouds spread forth and cover the sea of Nirvāṇa. This is called the Ground of Dharma Clouds.

The Thus Come One moves in reverse against the current, while such Bodhisattvas proceed forward in accord and arrive here. The two awakening currents (Buddha and Bodhisattva) enter into mutual union. This is called Equal Enlightenment.

Ānanda, from the mind of Dry Wisdom up to Equal Enlightenment, this awakening first gains, within the Vajra Mind, the initial Ground of Dry Wisdom. In this way, through layer upon layer—single and combined, in twelvefold progression—one at last exhausts Wondrous Enlightenment and accomplishes the unsurpassed Way.

All of these various grounds are contemplated by means of the vajra-like insight that examines the ten profound similes of illusion.

Within śamatha, one employs the pure cultivation and realization of the Thus Come Ones' vipaśyanā, and enters progressively, stage by stage, ever more deeply.

Ānanda, all of this is accomplished by means of the three progressive stages, and thus one becomes able to fulfill the fifty-five stages of the true path of Bodhi.

One who contemplates in this way is said to have right contemplation.

Any other kinds of contemplation are called deviant contemplation.

At that time Mañjuśrī, the Dharma Prince, was in the great assembly. He at once rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha:

"By what name should this sūtra be known? And how should I and all beings uphold it?"

The Buddha said to Mañjuśrī:

"This sūtra is called The Great Buddha-Crown Sitātapatrā (the Great White Canopy Buddha), the Unsurpassed Precious Seal, the Pure Ocean-Eye of the Thus Come Ones of the Ten Directions.

It is also called Saving and Protecting Those of Intimate Cause, delivering Ānanda and the Bhikṣuṇī Xing in this assembly, enabling them to bring forth the Bodhi-mind and enter the ocean of all-knowing.

It is also called The Thus Come Ones' Secret Cause, the Complete Meaning of Cultivation and Realization.

It is also called The Great, Expansive, Wondrous Lotus-Flower King, the Dhāraṇī Mantra of Mother of the Buddhas

of the Ten Directions.

It is also called the Śūraṅgama of the Crown-Anointing Verses of Vajrayana and the Foremost among the Myriad Practices of All Bodhisattvas.

You should reverently uphold it."

When these words had been spoken, Ānanda and the whole great assembly at once received the Thus Come One's revelation of the meaning of the secret seal and also heard the definitive title of this sūtra.

They suddenly awakened to the supreme and subtle principle by which dhyāna advances one through the holy stages. Their thoughts became empty and still, and they cut off the subtle afflictions of the first six grades in the cultivation of mind within the three realms.

Then Ānanda rose from his seat, bowed at the Buddha's feet, joined his palms reverently, and said to the Buddha:

"World-Honored One of great majesty and virtue, with your compassionate voice, withholding nothing and delivering to all sentient beings, you skillfully open the subtle and deeply hidden delusions of sentient beings, so that today my body and mind are gladdened with great benefit.

World-Honored One, if this wondrous, bright, true, and pure mind is originally all-pervading and perfect, then even the

great earth, the grasses and trees, and the creeping creatures that possess life—all are in their original True Suchness, and thus are themselves the true substance by which the Thus Come One accomplishes Buddhahood.

If the Buddha-body is true and real, then how can there again be the paths/realms of hell-beings, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, humans, and heavenly beings?

World-Honored One, are these realms originally there in themselves, or do they arise from the false habits of living beings?

World-Honored One, take for example Bhikṣuṇī Precious-Lotus-Fragrance. Though upholding the Bodhisattva precepts, the Bhikṣuṇī secretly practiced lust, and falsely declared that sexual conduct—since it is neither killing nor stealing—brings no karmic retribution. As soon as she uttered those words, a great fierce fire first arose from her female organ; afterward, fierce flames burned through every joint of her body, and she fell into the Unintermittent Hell.

As for King Liuli, and the bhikṣu Good Star: Liuli, because he slaughtered the Gautama clan; and Good Star, because he falsely proclaimed that all dharmas are empty—while still alive in their present bodies, they fell into the Avīci Hell.

Are these hells fixed places? Or do they arise naturally? Or does each one receive them according to his own false karma?

I only pray that the Tathāgata, in great compassion, will open the minds of the unawakened, so that all beings who uphold the precepts may hear the decisive meaning, receive it joyfully and reverently, and keep themselves pure and undefiled, without transgression."

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

"Excellent indeed is this question. It will keep living beings from falling into wrong views. Listen carefully now, and I shall explain it to you.

Ānanda, all living beings are in truth originally pure. But because of false seeing, false habitual tendencies arise; and from this there comes a division into an inner part and an outer part.

Ānanda, the inner part is what belongs to beings inwardly. Because of the defilement of craving and attachment, false emotion is stirred up. When emotion accumulates without cease, it can produce the water of love.

Therefore, when beings think of fine delicacies, water comes forth in the mouth. When they think of a former person, whether in affection or in hatred, tears fill the eyes. When they greedily seek wealth and treasure, the mind gives rise to covetous saliva, and the whole body becomes moist and glossy. When the mind is fixed on sexual desire, the male and female sexual organs naturally emit fluid.

Ānanda, although these loves differ, their flowing bondage is the same. Moisture and dampness do not rise; by their nature they sink downward. This is called the inner part.

Ānanda, the outer part is what belongs to beings outwardly. Because of yearning and aspiration, false imagining is brought forth. When imagination accumulates without cease, it is able to produce an upward and surpassing energy.

Therefore, when beings keep the precepts in mind, the whole body becomes light and pure. When they uphold mantras and seals in mind, their bearing becomes firm and heroic. When the mind longs to be born in the heavens, in dreams it rises and flies upward. When the mind dwells on a Buddha-land, a holy realm is dimly revealed. When one serves a good and wise teacher, one makes light of one's own body and life.

Ānanda, although these thoughts and aspirations differ, their lightness and upward movement are the same. What flies and moves does not sink but naturally rises beyond. This is called the outer part."

Ānanda, throughout the world, birth and death continue in succession. Birth follows along with habitual tendencies; death follows the currents of change. At the time when life is drawing to its end, before warmth and sensation have yet departed, all the good and evil of one's whole life suddenly appear at once. Death moves counter, birth moves with the current; and these two habits intermingle.

If there is pure thought alone, one immediately flies upward and is surely born in the heavens. If, within that upward-moving mind, there are also blessings, wisdom, and pure vows, then the mind naturally opens, one sees the Buddhas of the ten directions, and according to one's vow one is born in any of the pure lands.

If emotion is slight and thought is much, one rises lightly, though not very far. Then one becomes a flying immortal, a powerful ghost king, a flying yakṣa, or a ground-roaming rākṣasa, moving about in the Four Heavens without obstruction wherever one goes. Among such beings, if there are those with good vows and good minds—some who protect my Dharma, some who protect the precepts and accompany those who uphold them, some who protect the sacred mantras and accompany those who uphold them, or some who protect meditation practitioners for their abiding in mindfulness—such beings dwell close beneath the seat of the Thus Come One.

If emotion and thought are equal, one neither flies upward nor sinks downward, but is born among human beings. Where thought is brighter, there is intelligence; where emotion is heavier and dimmer, there is dullness.

If emotion is much and thought is little, one flows into horizontal birth: in the heavier case becoming those covered with fur, and in the lighter case becoming those with feathers.

With seven parts emotion and three parts thought, one sinks

below the wheel of water and is born on the edge of fire. Receiving the force of fierce fire, one becomes a hungry ghost. One is constantly scorched and burned; even water can harm one. With no food and no drink, one endures this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas.

With nine parts emotion and one part thought, one sinks through the wheel of fire and enters the region where wind and fire cross. In lighter cases one is born in the Intermittent Hell; in heavier cases, in the Unintermittent Hell—these are the two kinds of hell.

If there is pure emotion alone, one sinks straight into the Avīci Hell. And if, within that sinking mind, there is slander of the Great Vehicle (Mahayana), violation of the Buddha's prohibitory precepts, false and deluded preaching of Dharma, greedy acceptance of faith-offerings in vain, reckless receiving of reverence, or the five rebellious acts and the ten grave offenses, then one is born yet again in the Avīci Hells of the ten directions.

As one follows and creates evil karma, although one indeed brings it upon oneself, within the shared sphere of beings there is also a common ground for it.

Ānanda, all these are retributions felt by those living beings through the karma of their own making. They create the ten habitual causes and receive the sixfold intertwined retributions.

“What are the ten causes?

Ānanda:

First, the habit of lust joins with lust and arises through mutual friction. Rubbing and grinding without cease, it gives rise to a great and fierce fire, which stirs and flares within. It is like a person rubbing his two hands together, so that warmth appears. When these two habits ignite one another, there come to be such things as iron beds and copper pillars. Therefore, recognizing this fact, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to sexual indulgence alike as the **fire of desire**. Bodhisattvas, seeing desire, avoid it as they would a pit of fire.

Second, the habit of greed joins with greed and arises through mutual drawing in. This sucking and grasping does not stop, and so there comes to be piled-up cold and solid ice, bitterly freezing within. It is like a person drawing in wind with the mouth, so that a sensation of cold is produced. When these two habits oppress one another, there come to be such things as the hells of **The Eight Freezing Ice**. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to excessive craving alike as the **water of greed**. Bodhisattvas, seeing greed, avoid it as they would a pestilential sea.

Third, the habit of pride joins with pride and arises through mutual exalting and reliance. Rushing and flowing without rest, it gives rise to surging waves, and piled-up waves become water. It is like the tongue in a person’s mouth

repeatedly savoring flavor, and because of that, saliva is produced. When these two habits beat against one another, there come to be such things as rivers of blood, rivers of ashes, burning sands, poisonous seas, molten copper, and forced swallowing. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to arrogance and self-pride as **drinking the water of delusion**. Bodhisattvas, seeing pride, avoid it as they would a vast drowning flood.

Fourth, the habit of anger joins with anger and arises through mutual clashes. Opposition knotted without cease makes the mind hot and kindles fire, casting the very breath into metal. Thus, there come to be such things as mountains of knives, iron clubs, sword trees, sword wheels, axes, halberds, spears, and saws. It is like a person cherishing resentment, from whom a murderous sentiment flies forth. When these two habits strike against one another, there come to be such things as dismemberment, beheading, hacking, stabbing, pounding, and beating. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to wrath and hatred as **sharp knives and swords**. Bodhisattvas, seeing anger, avoid it as they would execution and slaughter.

Fifth, the habit of deceit joins with deceit and arises through mutual enticement. Drawing one another on without stopping, it gives rise to ropes, wooden clamps, strangling, and stocks. It is like water soaking a field, causing grasses and trees to grow. When these two habits prolong one another, there come to be such things as fetters, manacles, cangues, chains, whips, staffs, and cudgels. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of

the ten directions refer to treachery and falseness alike as **slanderous thieves**. Bodhisattvas, seeing deceit, fear it as they would wolves and jackals.

Sixth, the habit of fraud joins with fraud and arises through mutual cheating. Falsehood and deception continuing without cease make the mind fly toward cunning. Thus, there come to be dust, dirt, excrement, urine, filth, and impurity. It is like dust blown by the wind, with nothing clearly seen. When these two habits heap themselves upon one another, there come to be such things as sinking, drowning, tossing, being hurled down, drifting, and submersion. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to cheating and fraud alike as **robbery and slaughter**. Bodhisattvas, seeing fraud, avoid it as they would treading on venomous snakes and vipers.

Seventh, the habit of resentment joins with resentment and arises through mutual hatred. Thus, there come to be flying stones, thrown missiles, cages, confinements, cart-prisons, burning jars, and trapping sacks. It is like a sinister person harboring evil and nursing malice within. When these two habits swallow one another, there come to be such things as casting, hurling, seizing, grabbing, striking, shooting, throwing, and clutching. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to enemies full of resentment as **harmful ghosts that work against one**. Bodhisattvas, seeing resentment, avoid it as they would drinking poisoned alcohol.

Eighth, the habit of wrong views joins with wrong views

and arises through mutual insistence on what one takes to be clear—such as self-view, clinging to precepts and prohibitions, and misguided understanding of karmic acts. From this comes contradiction and opposition. Thus, there emerge judges and officials from the Underworld, taking charge in prosecutions with written records. It is like travelers on the road who come and go and see one another. When these two habits meet together, there come to be such things as investigation, questioning, examination, probing, interrogation, inspection, exposure, illumination, and the boys of good and evil holding registers for judgment while investigating the sinner's case. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to evil views alike as the **pit of views**. Bodhisattvas, seeing all such false and pervasive grasping, face it as one stands before a poisoned chasm.

Ninth, the habit of false accusation joins with false accusation and arises through slander and defamation. Thus, there come to be mountains closing in, rocks pressing together, grinding, pounding, plowing, and milling. It is like a slanderous villain forcing and oppressing the innocent and good. When these two habits press against one another, there come to be such things as pressing down, beating, constraining, squeezing, filtering, weighing, and measuring. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to resentful slander alike as a **slanderous tiger**. Bodhisattvas, seeing false accusation, fear it as they would a thunderbolt striking them.

Tenth, the habit of litigation joins with litigation and arises through noisy contention and concealment. Thus, there

come to be mirrors of karmic reflection, seeing, shining, and exposing. It is like a shadow in the noonday sun has nowhere else to be hidden. When these two habits are set forth side by side, there come to be evil companions, the mirror of karma, fire-jewels, the exposure of past deeds, and confrontational proofs. Therefore, all the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions refer to concealment alike as a **hidden thief**. Bodhisattvas contemplate concealment as though bearing a high mountain upon the head while walking over a vast sea."

"What are the six retributions?

Ānanda, all living beings create karma through the six consciousnesses. The evil retributions they summon forth emerge through the six faculties. How do these evil retributions emerge through the six faculties?

First, the retribution of sight draws in evil fruit.

When this karma of seeing intersects, then at the time of death one first sees fierce fire filling the worlds of the ten directions. The consciousness of the dying one flies and falls, riding the smoke, into the Unintermittent Hell. Two aspects then appear. One is clear seeing: one can see all kinds of evil things everywhere, and immeasurable dread arises. The second is dark seeing: in stillness nothing is seen, and immeasurable terror arises. Thus this fire of seeing, when it burns hearing, can become cauldrons of boiling broth and molten copper; when it burns breath, it can become black smoke and purple flames; when it burns taste, it can become scorched pellets

and iron mash; when it burns touch, it can become hot ashes and furnace charcoal; when it burns the mind, it can produce sparks bursting and scattering, fanning through empty space.

Second, the retribution of hearing draws in evil fruit.

When this karma of hearing intersects, then at the time of death one first sees great waves drowning heaven and earth. The consciousness of the dying one descends and pours along the current into the Unintermittent Hell. Two aspects then appear. One is open hearing: hearing all kinds of clamor, the spirit becomes confused and disordered. The second is closed hearing: in stillness nothing at all is heard, and the dark soul sinks into submersion. Thus these waves of hearing, when they pour into hearing, can become accusation and interrogation; when they pour into seeing, they can become thunder, roaring, and evil poisonous vapors; when they pour into breath, they can become rain and fog, drenching the body with poisonous insects; when they pour into taste, they can become pus, blood, and all manner of filth; when they pour into touch, they can become beasts, ghosts, excrement, and urine; when they pour into thought, they can become lightning and hail that shatter heart and soul.

Third, the retribution of smell draws in evil fruit.

When this karma of smell intersects, then at the time of death one first sees poisonous vapors filling near and far. The consciousness of the dying one leaps up from the ground and enters the Unintermittent Hell. Two aspects then appear. One

is free inhalation: one is smoked by all kinds of foul vapors until the heart is thrown into turmoil. The second is blocked inhalation: the vapors close off all passage, and one faints to the ground in suffocation. Thus this noxious breath of smell, when it strikes breath, can become crushing and trampling; when it strikes seeing, it can become fire and torches; when it strikes hearing, it can become drowning, sinking, surging, and boiling; when it strikes taste, it can become starvation and exhaustion; when it strikes touch, it can become bursting and rotting, or a great mountain of flesh with hundreds of thousands of eyes and countless mouths gnawing and devouring; when it strikes thought, it can become ashes, pestilential vapors, and flying sand and stones that smash the body to pieces.

Fourth, the retribution of taste draws in evil fruit.

When this karma of taste intersects, then at the time of death one first sees an iron net and fiercely blazing flames covering the world all around. The consciousness of the dying one passes downward through the hanging net, suspended upside down by the head, and enters the Unintermittent Hell. Two aspects then appear. One is drawing in breath: it congeals into hard ice, freezing and splitting flesh and body. The second is expelling breath: it flies forth as fierce fire, scorching and rotting the bones and marrow. Thus this tasting of flavor, when it passes through taste, can become bearing and enduring; when it passes through seeing, it can become burning gold and stone; when it passes through hearing, it can become sharp blades and weapons; when it passes through

smell, it can become a great iron cage covering the lands; when it passes through touch, it can become bows, arrows, crossbows, and shooting; when it passes through thought, it can become burning iron raining down from the sky.

Fifth, the retribution of touch draws in evil fruit.

When this karma of touch intersects, then at the time of death one first sees great mountains closing in from the four sides, with no path of escape left. The consciousness of the dying one sees a great iron city, fire-serpents and fire-dogs, tigers, wolves, lions, ox-headed jailers, and horse-headed rākṣasas, all holding spears and halberds, driving one through the city gate toward the Unintermittent Hell. Two aspects then appear. One is united touch: the closing mountains press upon the body until bones, flesh, and blood collapse and burst. The second is separated touch: swords and blades strike the body, and heart and liver are butchered and torn apart. Thus such contact, when it passes through touch, can become roads, watch-posts, halls, and judgment benches; when it passes through seeing, it can become burning and blazing; when it passes through hearing, it can become crashing, striking, stabbing, and shooting; when it passes through smell, it can become enclosing, bagging, torture, and binding; when it passes through taste, it can become plowing, clamping, beheading, and severing; when it passes through thought, it can become falling and flying, frying and roasting.

Sixth, the retribution of thought draws in evil fruit.

When this karma of thought intersects, then at the time of death one first sees evil winds destroying the lands. The consciousness of the dying one is blown up into the air, then whirled and cast down again, riding the wind into the Unintermittent Hell. Two aspects then appear. One is unawareness: when delusion reaches the extreme, one becomes wild and lost, running without rest. The second is not being deluded: when awareness remains, then one knows the suffering, and immeasurable searing torment arises, the pain so deep it is hard to bear. Thus such perverse thought, when thought knots with thought, it can become quarters and locations; when it knots with seeing, it can become mirrors and proofs; when it knots with hearing, it can become great closing rocks, ice, frost, earth, and fog; when it knots with breath, it can become great fire-carts, fire-ships, and fire-enclosures; when it knots with taste, it can become great crying out, regret, and weeping; when it knots with touch, it can become being made large or small, or ten thousand births and ten thousand deaths in a single day, lying face down or face up."

Ānanda, this is what is called the ten causes and six fruits of the hells. All of them are wrought by living beings through delusion and falsehood.

If living beings fully create evil karma, they enter the Avīci Hell and undergo immeasurable suffering for immeasurable kalpas.

If each of the six faculties separately commits such acts, and

what is done also involves both object and faculty, then that person enters the Eight Unintermittent Hells.

If body, speech, and mind all commit killing, stealing, and lust, then that person enters the Eighteen Hells.

If the three karmas are not all involved, but among them there is perhaps one act of killing and one of stealing, then that person enters the Thirty-Six Hells.

If through a single faculty one alone commits a single karma, then that person enters the One Hundred and Eight Hells.

Thus, living beings act separately and create separately, yet within the world they enter into a common realm of shared retribution.

These arise from false thoughts; they are not originally there.

“Further, Ananda, when these beings, because they broke the moral disciplines, violated the Bodhisattva precepts, reviled the Buddha’s Nirvana, and committed various other mixed karmic acts, have burned in retribution through kalpas, then, when their punishment is at last exhausted, they take on the forms of ghosts.

If, at root, greed for things was the offense, then when that person’s punishment is exhausted, on encountering things he takes form from them; this is called a strange ghost.

If greed for beauty was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering wind he takes form from it; this is called a drought-spirit ghost.

If greed for deluding others was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering beasts he takes form from them; this is called a bewitching ghost.

If greed through hatred was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering insects he takes form from them; this is called an insect-poison ghost.

If greed through brooding remembrance was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering decline he takes form from it; this is called a pestilence ghost.

If greed through arrogance was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering vapors he takes form from them; this is called a hungry ghost.

If greed through deceit was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering hidden darkness he takes form from it; this is called a nightmare ghost.

If greed for clever brilliance was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering subtle essences he takes form from them; this is called a wangliang (sprite and goblin) ghost.

If greed to accomplish one's ends was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering numinous force he takes form from it; this is called a servitor ghost.

If greed for faction and partisanship was the offense, then when that person's punishment is exhausted, on encountering human beings he takes form through them; this is called a messenger ghost.

Ananda, all such beings fall because of pure emotional craving. The fire of karma burns them dry, and they rise out above as ghosts. All these are brought about solely by the pull of their own deluded karmic imaginings. If they awaken to Bodhi, then the wondrous, perfect, luminous nature is originally without any such things at all."

Further, Ānanda, when the karma of the ghost state is exhausted, then both emotion and thought become emptied out. Only then, in the human world, does one encounter those to whom one was formerly indebted, meeting them as foes and counterparts. One takes on the body of an animal in order to repay old debts.

Ghosts that haunt objects—when the object perishes and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as owl-like creatures.

Wind-drought ghosts—when the wind is spent and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as

creatures of ill omen.

All manner of strange species, the ghosts that bewitch animals—when the animal dies and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as fox-like creatures.

Insect-poison ghosts—when the poison is extinguished and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as poisonous creatures.

Ghosts of decline and pestilence—when their decline is exhausted and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as worms.

Ghosts that feed on vapors—when the vapors are dispersed and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as creatures used for food.

Ghosts that lurk in hidden gloom—when that darkness is exhausted and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as creatures for raiment.

Ghosts that blend with essences—when that blending is exhausted and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as responsive kinds.

Luminous spirit-ghosts—when that brightness is extinguished and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as auspicious portents.

All those ghosts of various kinds that depend upon human beings—when the person dies and their retribution is ended—are born into the world mostly as compliant kinds.

Ānanda, all these, with the fire of karma dried up, repay their former debts by becoming animals in a lateral form. All these too are drawn forth by their own false karma.

If one awakens to Bodhi, then these false conditions are seen to have had no real existence from the start.

As with those you spoke of—Precious-Lotus-Fragrance and the others, King Liuli, and Bhikṣu Good Star—such evil karma arises from themselves. It does not descend from heaven, nor come forth from the earth, nor is it given by others. What is summoned by one's own delusion is in turn received by oneself.

Within the Bodhi-mind, all of it is but floating, empty, false thought congealed into form.

Further, Ānanda, when such animals are repaying former debts, if the one who is repaid takes more than what was owed, then those beings, once again becoming human, will in turn come back to claim the excess.

If the one who over-collected has strength and possesses merit and virtue, then among humans he need not lose his human body but may repay that force while remaining human. But if he has no merit, then he becomes an animal in turn, repaying

the remainder of the debt.

Ānanda, you should know: if one repays with money or goods, or by laboring with one's strength, once the repayment is complete it naturally comes to an end. But if, in the midst of it, one kills that creature's life, or eats its flesh, then for kalpas as numerous as motes of dust they will go on eating one another and killing one another, just like a turning wheel, each alternately above and below, with no rest. Apart from śamatha and the appearance of a Buddha in the world, this cannot be brought to a stop.

You should now know: those of the owl kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the stubborn sort.

Those of the ominous-portent kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the abnormal sort.

Those of the fox kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the mediocre sort.

Those of the poisonous kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the fierce sort.

Those of the worm kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed

into the lowly sort.

Those of the devouring kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the yielding sort.

Those of the domestic category, having fully repaid their debts and recovered their human form, are born into the human realm to mix with the laboring classes.

"Those of the seasonal category, having fully repaid their debts and recovered their human form, are born into the human realm to mix with the cultured sort.

Those of the auspicious-portent kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the bright and clever sort.

Those of the compliant kind, when their repayment is complete and they regain human form, are born among humans mixed into the socially adept sort.

Ānanda, all these, having fully repaid their former debts, regain human form. Yet all of them, from beginningless time onward, have been driven by karmic retributions and inverted delusion, giving birth and taking life in turn. If they do not encounter the Thus Come One and do not hear the right Dharma, then amid the dust and toil of the world they revolve on by their very nature. Such beings are called those who are to be pitied.

Further, Ānanda, there are those who, starting from the human state, do not rely on proper enlightenment in cultivating samādhi. Instead, they cultivate separate false thoughts, preserving imagined form and fixing the body, roaming in mountains and forests, in places where people do not reach. There are ten kinds of immortals.

Ānanda, among these beings, those who persist firmly and without rest in taking elixirs and ingesting substances, so that the way of food is brought to completion, are called **earth-roaming immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in herbs and trees, so that the way of medicines is brought to completion, are called **flying immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in metals and minerals, so that the way of transformation is brought to completion, are called **wandering immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in movement and stillness, so that the refinement of vital energy is brought to completion, are called **air-roaming immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in bodily fluids, so that the virtue of moistening is brought to completion, are called **heaven-roaming immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in essence and form, so that drawing in the pure becomes complete, are

called **penetrating immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in spells and prohibitions, so that arts and methods are brought to completion, are called **way-roaming immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in thought and recollection, so that thought and memory are brought to completion, are called **illuminating immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in intercourse and conjunction, so that sympathetic response is brought to completion, are called **essence-roaming immortals**.

Those who persist firmly and without rest in transformations, so that awareness is brought to completion, are called **absolute-roaming immortals**.

Ānanda, all these are beings who refine the mind while still among humans, yet do not cultivate proper enlightenment. They gain a special mode of life and live for ten thousand or ten million years. They rest in deep mountains or on great ocean islands, cut off from the human world. Yet they too are carried along in the flowing turn of delusive thought within saṃsāra. Because they do not cultivate samādhi, when their retribution is exhausted they return again and scatter into the various destinies.

Ānanda, among worldly people there are those who do not seek abiding permanence, and who have not yet been

able to renounce attachment to wives and concubines. Yet in wrongful lust their minds do not wander loosely; being clarified and pure, brightness is born. After death, they dwell near the sun and moon. Such a class is called the **Heaven of the Four Kings**.

As for those whose lust and love toward their own wives is slight, and who, in times of purity, do not fully savor desire, after death they rise beyond the light of sun and moon and dwell at the summit above the human world. Such a class is called the **Trāyastriṃśa Heaven**.

When they meet desire, they unite only briefly, and afterward no thought or memory remains. In the human world they move little and are mostly still. After death they abide serenely in empty space; the light of sun and moon does not reach them, for these beings themselves have their own light. Such a class is called the **Suyāma Heaven**.

Those who are still at all times, though when responsive contact comes, they are not yet able to refuse it - after death they rise into subtler realms, no longer touching the lower realms of humans and gods. Even when a kalpa is destroyed, the three disasters do not reach them. Such a class is called the **Tuṣita Heaven**.

Those who say, “I have no mind of desire; I merely respond to your act,” and for whom, when sexual contact is set forth, its taste is like chewing wax—after death they are born beyond the realm of transformation. Such a class is called the

Heaven of Delight in Transformation.

Those who have no worldly mind, though they still act in worldly ways, and who in the very act of union are clearly and utterly beyond it—after death they can everywhere transcend both transformed and untransformed states. Such a class is called the **Heaven of *Para-nirmita-vaśa-vartin* (Taking Delight in Others' Transformations).**

Ānanda, these six heavens, though in bodily form they have gone beyond coarse movement, still bear traces of mental intercourse. From here downward, all this is called the **Desire Realm**.

IX

Ānanda, among all those in the world who cultivate the mind, if they do not rely on dhyāna, they cannot have wisdom. Yet if they can simply hold the body and refrain from sexual desire, so that whether walking or sitting, such thoughts are altogether absent, and if craving and defilement do not arise, so that they no longer remain in the Desire Realm, then such a person, at the moment of death, becomes a companion of Brahmā. Such beings are called the Heaven of the Brahmā Multitudes.

When the habits of desire have already been removed, and a mind apart from desire appears, then in all moral disciplines they delight in and accord with them. Such a person can then practice the virtue of Brahmā. Such beings are called the Heaven of the Brahmā Ministers.

When body and mind are wondrously complete, their deportment never lacking, and pure precepts are joined with bright understanding, such a person can then govern the Brahmā hosts and become a Great Brahmā King. Such beings are called the Heaven of Great Brahmā.

Ānanda, these three superior streams are beyond the reach of all suffering and affliction. Though they are not yet cultivating the true samādhi in the proper sense, within the purity of their minds the outflows do not stir. This is called the First Dhyāna.

Ānanda, next are those Brahmā heavens which govern and gather in the Brahmā beings, bringing the Brahmā conduct to perfection. Their minds, clarified, do not move; in still and limpid quietude, light arises. Such a class is called the Heaven of Lesser Light.

Light answering to light, they illumine without end, shining throughout the worlds of the ten directions, so that all becomes like crystal. Such a class is called the Heaven of Limitless Light.

Drawing in and sustaining this perfect light, they accomplish the very substance of teaching. Their transformative purity unfolds, and their responsive function is inexhaustible. Such a class is called the Heaven of Light-Sound.

Ānanda, these three superior streams are beyond the reach of all anxiety and sorrow. Though they are not yet cultivating the true samādhi in the proper sense, within the purity of their minds the coarse outflows have already been subdued. This is called the Second Dhyāna.

Ānanda, among such heavenly beings, perfect light becomes sound; unfolding that sound, the subtle is revealed, and it develops into refined conduct, so that they enter the bliss of quiescent extinction. Such a class is called the Heaven of Lesser Purity.

When pure emptiness appears before them and is drawn forth without limit, body and mind become light and at peace, and

they attain the bliss of quiescent extinction. Such a class is called the Heaven of Limitless Purity.

The world and body and mind, all become perfectly pure. The virtue of purity is accomplished, and a supreme support appears before them, whereby they return to the bliss of quiescent extinction. Such a class is called the Heaven of Universal Purity.

Ānanda, these three superior streams possess great accord; body and mind are secure and at peace, and they obtain immeasurable bliss. Though they have not yet truly attained the genuine samādhi, within their peaceful minds joy is fully complete. This is called the Third Dhyāna.

Ānanda, further, among these heavenly beings, body and mind are no longer pressed by suffering, and the causes of suffering have already come to an end. Yet bliss is not permanent; after long abiding, it must still give rise to decay. Therefore, the two minds of suffering and bliss are together suddenly cast aside. As the coarse and heavy aspects vanish, the nature of pure merit comes forth. Such a class is called the Heaven of Blessed Birth.

When the mind of equanimity becomes perfectly integrated and their superior understanding is pure, then within merit that knows no obstruction they gain wondrous accord that reaches the limit of the future. Such a class is called the Heaven of Blessed Love.

Ānanda, from this heaven there are two branching paths:

If, in the mind cultivated before, immeasurable pure light and merit have become perfectly bright, and one abides there through cultivation and realization, such a class is called the Heaven of Extensive Fruit.

But if, in that former mind, one has equally wearied of both suffering and bliss, and then refines the mind of equanimity without interruption, exhausting to the utmost the path of equanimity until body and mind are both extinguished, so that thought and reflection become like ashes, congealed for five hundred kalpas—such a person, because he has taken arising and ceasing as the cause, cannot bring forth the nature of non-arising and non-ceasing. For the first half of the kalpa he is extinguished; for the latter half he is born again. Such a class is called the Heaven of No Thought.

Ānanda, these four superior streams cannot be moved by any states of suffering or joy in the whole world. Though they are not yet the true, unmoving ground of the unconditioned, the mind that seeks attainment has here become pure and fully mature in its function. This is called the Fourth Dhyāna.

Ānanda, within this there are again the Five Heavens of No Return (No reincarnation into the Desire Realm). In the lower realms, the nine grades of habitual tendencies are all extinguished at once. Suffering and bliss are both forgotten, and below there is no further place to dwell. Therefore, within the common sphere of those abiding in equanimity, these

heavens are established as their dwelling places.

Ānanda, when both suffering and bliss are extinguished, and the mind of struggle no longer arises, such a class is called the Heaven of No Affliction.

When the subtle mechanism moves alone, and there is no ground left for opposition and conflict, such a class is called the Heaven of No Heat.

When throughout the worlds of the ten directions, wondrous seeing becomes perfectly clear and still, and there are no longer any dusty appearances or sinking defilements of any kind, such a class is called the Heaven of Good Seeing.

When refined seeing stands forth before one, with free and unhindered mastery in shaping and refining, such a class is called the Heaven of Good Manifestation.

When the subtle workings of all things are brought to their utmost end, and one exhausts the nature of form itself, entering into the boundless limit, such a class is called the Heaven of the Ultimate of Form.

Ānanda, as for these Heavens of No Return, even the four heavenly kings of the Four Dhyānas can only reverently hear of them; they are not able to know or see them.

It is like the sacred grounds of the holy path in the deep wilderness and lofty mountains of the world today: because

they are upheld and maintained by Arhats, the coarse people of the world are unable to see them.

Ānanda, these eighteen heavens remain in solitary existence, without mutual intercourse, yet they have not exhausted the burden of form. From this point downward, all is called the Form Realm.

Further, Ānanda, from within the uppermost boundary of the Form Realm, there are again two divergent paths:

If, within the mind of equanimity, one gives rise to illumining wisdom, and the light of that wisdom becomes perfect and unobstructed, then one transcends the dusty world, becomes an Arhat, and enters the Bodhisattva Vehicle. Such a class is called the Great Arhats who convert to the Mahayana Vehicle.

But if, while abiding in equanimity, one perfects the renunciation born of weariness, and perceives the body as an obstruction, then dissolves that obstruction and enters emptiness, such a class is called the Sphere of Infinite Space.

Once all obstructions have been dissolved, there is no more obstruction and no more extinction. Within that state there remains only the ālaya-consciousness, together with the exceedingly subtle half-share of manas. Such a class is called the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness.

When both emptiness and form are gone, and the consciousness-mind is also extinguished, then the ten

directions are utterly still, with nowhere to turn and nowhere to go. Such a class is called the Sphere of Nothing Whatsoever.

The nature of consciousness remains unmoving, and by pursuing extinction to its utmost, one proclaims within the endless a nature of exhaustion: as if existing, yet not existing; if exhausted, yet not exhausted. Such a class is called the Sphere of Neither Thought nor Non-Thought.

These beings exhaust emptiness, yet do not exhaust the principle of emptiness. Those who, coming from the Heavens of No Return, have exhausted the holy path in this way, are called dull Arhats who do not convert their initial aspirations for cultivation.

But if one comes from the heretic heavens of No Thought, and, exhausting emptiness, does not return, then because of delusion, afflictions, and lack of right hearing, one enters again into the wheel/cycle of rebirth.

Ānanda, among all those heavenly beings in the various heavens, each and every one is still an ordinary being receiving the recompense of karma. When that recompense is exhausted, they re-enter the wheel of rebirth. But the kings of those heavens are in fact Bodhisattvas who, while roaming in samādhi, advance step by step and cultivate the path that turns back toward the ranks of the holy ones.

Ānanda, in these Four Heavens of Emptiness, body and mind

are extinguished, and fixed absorption appears before them. There is no form there as karmic retribution. From that point up to the end, it is called the Formless Realm.

All of these fail to understand the wondrous enlightened bright mind. From accumulated falsehood there arises the delusive existence of the three realms. Within them, by delusion, beings sink and drift among the seven destinies. Each pudgala follows its own kind.

Further, Ānanda, within these Three Realms there are again four kinds of asuras.

If, within the ghost realm, one has used the power of protecting the Dharma and, by means of spiritual powers, rises into emptiness, then that kind of asura is born from eggs and is included within the destiny of ghosts.

If, from among the heavens, one falls through a lessening of virtue and dwells in a place neighboring the sun and moon, then that kind of asura is born from the womb and is included within the destiny of humans.

There are asura kings who uphold the world, whose power is penetrating and fearless, and who are able to contend for authority with Brahmā, with Indra, and with the Four Heavenly Kings. Such asuras come into being through transformation and are included within the destiny of gods.

Ānanda, there is yet another class of lower asuras. They are

born in the heart of the great sea, sink at the mouths of watery caverns, roam in empty space by day, and return to dwell in the waters at night. Such asuras arise from moisture and are included within the destiny of animals.

Ānanda, so it is with hell-beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans and immortals, gods, and asuras. When the seven destinies/realms are examined in full, all of them are but dim and sinking conditioned appearances. They are born from false thought, and false thought follows karma.

Viewed from the wondrous, perfect, bright, and original mind that is free from all contrivance, they are all like flowers in empty space, having from the first nothing on which they truly rest.

They are only a single falsehood of manifestation, and beyond that there is no root or trace at all.

Ānanda, these living beings, because they do not recognize the original mind, undergo this round of rebirth through immeasurable kalpas and never attain true purity. All of this is because they are subject to the karmic acts of killing, stealing, and lust.

When these three are reversed, then there arises the state free from killing, stealing, and lust. Where there is still a "having," it is called the realm of ghosts and other lower realms. Where there is "non-having," it is called the destiny of the heavens. As being and non-being incline against one another, the

nature of saṃsāra arises.

But if one is able to bring forth the wondrous samādhi, then there is wondrous constancy and quiescence. Both being and non-being are absent, and even that absence of the two is itself extinguished.

When even "not killing," "not stealing," and "not lusting" are no longer held to, how much less could one still follow along with acts of killing, stealing, and lust?

Ānanda, if the three karmic acts (killing, stealing, and lust) are not cut off, then each has its own private share. Because each has its own private share, the many private shares together form a common sphere; thus, it is not that there is no fixed place for them. They arise from one's own delusion. Deluded arising has no cause that can truly be traced out or investigated.

You should exert yourselves in spiritual cultivation. If you wish to attain Bodhi, you must remove the three delusions. If the three delusions are not exhausted, then even if you gain spiritual powers, they are all merely conditioned functions within the world. If habitual tendencies are not extinguished, you will fall into the path of demons. Though you may wish to remove delusion, you only double your falseness. The Thus Come One therefore says that such beings are truly pitiable. Your delusion is self-made; it is not the fault of Bodhi.

To speak in this way is called right speech. Any other way of

speaking is the speech of the demon-king.

At that very time the Thus Come One, about to rise from His Dharma Throne, leaned upon the table of seven treasures on the lion-throne, turned his purple-golden mountain-like body, and again rested Himself upon the seat. Then he addressed the whole great assembly and Ānanda, saying:

"You who are still learners, pratyekabuddhas, and śrāvakas, have today converted your minds into the great Bodhi and unsurpassed wondrous enlightenment. I have now already spoken the true method of cultivation. Yet you still do not recognize the subtle demonic events in the cultivation of śamatha and vipaśyanā. When demonic states appear before you, you will not be able to recognize them. Though you try to purify the mind, if it is not done rightly, you will fall into wrong views.

Perhaps it will be a skandha-demon within you; perhaps again a heavenly demon; perhaps attachment to ghosts and spirits; perhaps an encounter with goblins and strange beings. If there is no clarity in the mind, then you will mistake a thief for your own son.

Again, within such states, you may gain only a little and take it as enough. Like that bhikṣu of the Fourth Dhyāna who had heard little and falsely declared that he had realized sainthood: when his heavenly reward was exhausted and the signs of decline appeared, he slandered the Arhats by saying that they too must again undergo reincarnation, and he fell

into the Avīci Hell.

You should listen carefully. I will now explain these things to you in fine detail."

Ānanda rose to his feet, and together with all those in the assembly who were still in training, joyfully bowed their heads in reverence and listened with full submission to His compassionate instruction.

The Buddha said to Ānanda and the whole great assembly:

"You should know that, in the conditioned world, the twelve classes of beings all possess the wondrously bright, perfectly awakened mind-essence of original enlightenment, which is no different and in no way distinct from that of the Buddhas of the ten directions.

But because of your false thoughts, you become confused about the truth, and from that fault, ignorance and craving arise. From the arising of life there comes pervasive delusion, and thus there is the nature of emptiness. As transformed delusion continues without cease, worlds are born. Thus, the Buddha-lands of the ten directions, as numerous as motes of dust—insofar as they are not of the unconditioned—are all established through deluded obstinacy and false imagination.

You should know that empty space itself arises within your own mind, like a tiny cloud-dot in the vast clear sky. How much more so the worlds within that empty space? If even

one among you were to bring forth the truth and return to the source, then all the empty space throughout the ten directions would vanish. How then could the lands within that empty space fail to tremble and split apart?

When you cultivate dhyāna and adorn samādhi, the Bodhisattvas of the ten directions and all the great Arhats free of merit outflows, their minds essentially in communion, remain still and clear right where they are. But all demon-kings, ghosts and spirits, and the heavens of ordinary beings, seeing their palaces collapse for no reason, the great earth split open, and waters, lands, and flying things all thrown into upheaval, are all struck with fear and alarm. Ordinary beings are dull and dark, and do not perceive this change and disorder.

Those beings all possess the five kinds of spiritual powers, lacking only the ultimate spiritual powers of "No Merit-Outflows." Because they remain attached to the dust and toil of the world, how could they allow you to shatter and split apart their dwelling places? Therefore, ghosts and spirits, heavenly demons, goblins, and strange essences all come together to trouble you while you are in samādhi.

Yet although those demons may be filled with great rage, within their dusty toil and within your wondrous awakening, it is like wind blowing against light, or a knife cutting water: they never truly make contact. You are like boiling soup; they are like solid ice. As the warming vapor gradually draws near, before long they melt away. They rely only on their spiritual

powers but remain merely guests. If they are able to bring about disturbance and destruction, it is only because within your own mind the host of the five skandhas has given them the opportunity. If the master is confused, the guest gains the advantage.

If, in dhyāna, you awaken and are not deluded, then there is nothing those demonic events can do to you. When the skandhas are dissolved and one enters into brightness, then all those host of evils receive only dim and hidden energy. Brightness can shatter darkness; when it comes near, they dissolve themselves. How then could they remain and disturb your meditative concentration?

But if you do not awaken clearly and are confused by the skandhas, then you, Ānanda, will certainly become a child of the demons and accomplish the state of a demonic person. Maṭaṅgī was exceedingly trivial and humble by nature. She used only a spell on you and merely broke the Buddha's precept. Of the eighty thousand practices, she destroyed only one precept. Because your mind was pure, you still had not sunk into ruin. But here it would destroy your whole body of precious awakening, like a great ministerial house suddenly struck with confiscation - scattered and ruined beyond all rescue."

Ānanda, you should know: when you sit in the bodhimaṇḍa and let all thoughts fall away, then, if those thoughts are exhausted, all that remains apart from thought is an utter brightness. Motion and stillness no longer shift; mindfulness

and deluded thoughts become one. When you abide in that state and enter samādhi, it is like a person with clear eyes standing in great darkness: the essential nature is wondrous, pure, and clear, yet the mind has not yet given forth light. This is called the secluded region of the skandha of form.

If the eyes become bright and clear, and the ten directions open through and through, with no further dimness or darkness, this is called the exhaustion of the skandha of form. At that point this person is able to transcend the turbidity of kalpas. In contemplating its source, he sees that solidified false thought is its root.

Ānanda, while abiding here and deeply refining wondrous clarity, the Four Great Elements may fail to interweave, and in a short while the body may be able to pass through obstructions. This is called the essential brightness overflowing into the former condition. This is only a temporary result of effort and function, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, deeply refining wondrous clarity, one may see through the body from within. Suddenly, within his own body, he may take out parasitic worms, yet the body remains whole and unharmed. This is called the essential brightness overflowing through the physical body. This too is only a temporary attainment in refined practice, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception

of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, refining inward and outward to clarity, at that time the soul, the corporeal spirit, intention, will, and essence—apart from the body that receives and sustains them—may all intermingle and enter one another, acting by turns as guest and host. Suddenly, in empty space, one may hear the sound of Dharma being spoken, or hear the secret meaning being proclaimed everywhere throughout the ten directions. This is called the subtle essences alternately separating and joining, bringing wholesome seeds to completion. This too is only a temporary attainment, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, made clear, open, and penetrating, inner light may shine forth. The ten directions may all appear as the color of Jambūnada gold, and every kind of being may transform into Thus Come Ones. Then one may suddenly see Vairocana seated upon a heavenly platform of light, surrounded by a thousand Buddhas, while hundred millions of Buddha-lands and lotuses appear all at once. This is called the spirit and soul being suffused by numinous awakening, the light of the mind refined into brightness so that it illumines all worlds. This too is only a temporary attainment, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of

evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, deeply refining wondrous clarity, observing without pause, suppressing, restraining, subduing, and controlling in order to transcend, one may suddenly see all the empty space of the ten directions become the color of the seven treasures, or of a hundred treasures, filling all places at once without obstructing one another. Blue, yellow, red, and white may each appear in complete purity. This is called the power of suppression having gone beyond proper measure. This too is only a temporary attainment, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, studying until all becomes limpid and clear, with the essential light undisturbed, one may suddenly, at midnight in a dark room, see all kinds of things just as if it were broad daylight. Yet the things in the dark room are not thereby removed. This is called the mind becoming subtle, secretly clarifying its seeing, so that what it beholds penetrates the hidden. This too is only a temporary attainment, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, perfectly entering into liberating emptiness. Then the four limbs may suddenly

become like grass and wood, so that even if burned by fire or cut by blades, one feels nothing at all. Or else fire itself cannot burn the body, and even if flesh is cut away, it is as though one were shaving wood. This is called the dust-elements combining and expelling the nature of the four elements, so that one enters entirely into one-sided purity. This too is only a temporary attainment, not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, when purity is brought to completion and the power of the pure mind reaches its utmost, one may suddenly see the great earth and the mountains and rivers of the ten directions all become Buddha-lands, adorned with the seven treasures and filled everywhere with light. One may also see Buddhas, Thus Come Ones as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, filling all empty space, with magnificent towers and halls. Below one sees the hells; above one beholds the heavenly palaces, with no obstruction between them. This is called delight and aversion congealing ever more deeply in imagination, so that after long imagination it transforms into such appearances. This is not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, pursuing inquiry ever more deeply, one may suddenly, in the middle of the night, see faraway marketplaces, streets, relatives, and family members,

or hear their voices. This is called the mind being pressed to an extreme, so that it flies outward and sees across great distances. This is not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then it is called a wholesome state. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Again, by means of this mind, when inquiry reaches an extreme of refinement, one may see a good and wise advisor whose form and appearance suddenly shift and change in various ways for no apparent reason. This is called an evil influence secretly entering and being received by the mind, or perhaps a heavenly demon entering into one's heart and belly. Without any cause, one then speaks Dharma and seems able to penetrate wondrous meanings. This is not a holy realization. If one does not form a holy conception of it, then the demonic event subsides. But if one interprets it as sainthood, one at once invites the host of evil influences.

Ānanda, these ten kinds of manifest states appearing in dhyāna all arise because the mind's functioning within the skandha of form interacts in various ways, and thus these events appear.

Living beings are stubborn and deluded, and do not rightly measure themselves. When such causes and conditions arise before them, they are confused and do not recognize their own delusion, but instead claim that they have ascended to sainthood. Once this great false speech is accomplished, they fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

After the Thus Come One's paranirvana (earthly extinction), all of you should proclaim and make this sermon known in the Dharma-Declining Era to prevent heavenly demons from seizing such any chance to mislead the practitioners. Protect and uphold beings, shelter and guard them, so that they may accomplish the unsurpassed Way.

Ānanda, when that good man, cultivating samādhi and abiding in śamatha, has exhausted the skandha of form, then he sees the minds of the Buddhas as images appearing in a bright mirror. Yet though there is something attained, he is not yet able to make use of it.

It is like a person oppressed by nightmare: his hands and feet are plainly there, and his seeing and hearing are not confused, yet his mind is obstructed by a passing evil influence, and he cannot move.

This is what is called the region of the skandha of sensations.

If the fault of that oppressive nightmare comes to rest, then the mind leaves the body and, turning back, can behold its own face. Going and staying are then free, and there is no further obstruction. This is called the exhaustion of the skandha of sensations.

At that point this person is able to transcend the turbidity of views. In contemplating its source, he sees that illusory brightness born of false thought is its root.

Ānanda, when that good man is abiding in this state and gains a great radiance, his mind becomes illumined, but inwardly he presses it down to excess. Then, in that very place, he may suddenly give rise to boundless sorrow and compassion. He may even look upon a mosquito or an insect as though it were an infant child, and his heart will give rise to pity and tenderness, so that tears flow without his being aware of it.

This is called the power of practice suppressing and subduing beyond due measure. If he awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization. If he remains aware and is not confused, then in time it will subside in itself.

But if he interprets it as sainthood, then a demon of sorrow and compassion enters into his heart and bowels. At the sight of people, he becomes filled with grief, weeping and lamenting without end. He loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Ānanda, again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, and when a surpassing state appears before them, they may be stirred and moved beyond measure. Suddenly, within that state, they give rise to boundless boldness. Their minds become fierce and sharp, and their aspiration equals that of all Buddhas. They declare that the three asaṃkhyeya kalpas can be transcended in a single thought.

This is called the power of practice rushing ahead and

overstepping its proper measure. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization. If one remains aware and is not confused, then in time it will subside of itself.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a demon of madness enters into the heart and bowels. At the sight of people, one boasts and exalts oneself, with arrogance beyond all measure. In such a mind, one no longer sees the Buddha above, nor sees other people below. One loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, yet no new realization appears before them, and they have already lost their former resting place, then their strength of wisdom weakens. Entering into a collapsed middle state, they turn back and see nothing at all. Suddenly, within the mind, there arises a great dryness and thirst. At all times they remain sunk in recollection, unable to let it go, taking this to be the mark of diligent and refined exertion.

This is called losing oneself in cultivation because there is effort of mind without wisdom. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a demon of fixation and recollection enters into the heart and bowels. From morning to night, it gathers and binds the mind, suspending it in one single place. One loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, their power of wisdom may exceed their power of samādhi, so that they lose proper steadiness and become overly sharp and forceful. Holding all those superior qualities in mind, they come to suspect that they themselves are already Vairocana, and, gaining only a little, take it as sufficient.

This is called the mind, in its functioning, losing constant and careful discernment, and sinking into attachment to its own views. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a low and inferior demon of easy self-satisfaction enters into the heart and bowels. At the sight of people, one declares of oneself, "I have attained the unsurpassed highest truth." One loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, yet no new realization has been attained, their former ground has already been lost. Surveying among the two skandhas, they give rise within themselves to danger and hardship. Suddenly, within the mind, there arises an endless sorrow. It is as though they were sitting on an iron bed or drinking poison. In their hearts they no longer wish to live. They constantly seek someone to take their life, wishing for an early release.

This is called cultivation that has lost its proper skillful means. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a kind of demon of constant sorrow and grief enters into the heart and bowels. One may take up knives and swords and cut one's own flesh, delighting in giving up one's life. Or else one remains continually sorrowful and grieving, running off into mountains and forests, unable to bear the sight of other people. One loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, and after the mind has come to rest securely within purity, there may suddenly arise an immeasurable joy of itself. The heart becomes delighted and pleased, unable to stop itself.

This is called light ease without wisdom, such that one cannot restrain oneself. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a kind of demon delighting in joy and pleasure enters into the heart and bowels. At the sight of people, one laughs. By the roadside and in the streets, one sings and dances by oneself, claiming to have already attained unobstructed liberation. One loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, they may suppose themselves already complete, and suddenly, for no reason, great self-arrogance arises. So too, together with pride, excessive pride, pride beyond excessive pride, overweening pride, and even abject pride - all may arise at once. In the mind, they may even look lightly upon the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions, how much more so those of lower station such as śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

This is called seeing oneself as superior without the wisdom to save oneself. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a kind of demon of great self-arrogance enters into the heart and bowels. As a result, this person no longer bows to stupas or temples but destroys sūtras and images and tells the donors: “These are only gold, copper, clay, or wood. The scriptures are only leaves or cloth and flowers. The flesh-body is the true and eternal one. To fail to honor oneself and instead revere clay and wood is truly upside-down.”

Those who deeply believe such words follow along and smash the images, burying and discarding them in the earth. Thus, he misleads living beings and causes them to enter the Unintermittent Hell. He loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, they may, within that refined brightness, awaken in a rounded way to the subtle principle and gain great accord with it. Then, suddenly, the mind gives rise to immeasurable lightness and ease. They declare themselves already accomplished saints, having attained great liberation.

This is called, through wisdom, obtaining various states of light purity. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a kind of demon delighting in light purity enters into the heart and bowels. One declares oneself already fulfilled and seeks no further advance. Such people often become bhikṣus who have heard little. They mislead living beings and cause them to fall into the Avīci Hell. One loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, they may, within awakened clarity, gain a sense of empty luminosity. Then, suddenly, within that state, the mind turns toward eternal extinction. It rejects the law of causation and enters one-sidedly into emptiness. When the mind of emptiness appears before them, they may even give rise to a lasting view of annihilation and extinction.

If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy

realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a demon of emptiness enters into the heart and bowels. Such a person then slanders those who uphold the precepts, calling them followers of the lesser vehicle (Hinayana). He says, "If a Bodhisattva has awakened to emptiness, then what meaning can there be in keeping or violating precepts?"

Such a person will often, in the presence of faithful donors, drink wine, eat meat, and engage widely in lustful defilement. Because of the demon's power, those before him do not give rise to doubt or reproach. When the demonic mind has entered for a long time, he may even eat filth and urine together with alchohol and meat, declaring that all are equally empty. In this way he destroys the Buddha's discipline and misleads people into grave offenses. He loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Again, among those good men in samādhi, when they see the skandha of form dissolve and the skandha of sensations become clear, they may relish that empty luminosity until it sinks deep into the heart and bones. Then suddenly the mind gives rise to boundless affection and attachment. When that attachment reaches an extreme, it breaks into madness and becomes craving and lust.

This is called the state of samādhi bringing a sense of peaceful accord into the mind, while, for lack of wisdom, one cannot uphold oneself and so falls by mistake into the various

desires. If one awakens to this, there is no fault; it is not a holy realization.

But if one interprets it as sainthood, then a demon of desire enters into the heart and bowels. He then speaks one-sidedly, saying that desire itself is the path of Bodhi. He converts lots of lay people, urging them to engage equally in lust, and those who practice sexual conduct he calls "sons who uphold the Dharma."

Because of the power of ghosts and spirits, in the Dharma-Declining Era he draws in foolish ordinary people, their number reaching a hundred, or even a hundred or two hundred, or five or six hundred, and many times filling the thousands and myriads. But when the demonic mind grows weary and leaves his body, then his power and virtue are gone, and he falls under the punishment of kings. He misleads living beings and causes them to enter the Unintermittent Hell. He loses right samādhi and in the end falls into ruin.

Ānanda, these ten kinds of manifest states appearing in dhyāna all arise because the mind's functioning within the skandha of sensations interacts in various ways, and thus these events appear.

Living beings are stubborn and deluded, and do not rightly measure themselves. When such causes and conditions arise before them, they are confused and do not recognize their own delusion, but instead claim that they have ascended to sainthood. Once this great false speech is accomplished, they

fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

All of you should also take the Thus Come One's words and, after my extinction, transmit and reveal them in the Final Dharma age. Cause all living beings everywhere to awaken to this meaning. Do not allow heavenly demons to seize such an opportunity. Protect and uphold beings, shelter and guard them, so that they may accomplish the unsurpassed Way.

Ānanda, when that good man, cultivating samādhi, has exhausted the skandha of sensations, then, although the merit-outflows (afflictions) are not yet ended, the mind has already separated from the body, like a bird leaving the cage. He is then able to accomplish, from that ordinary bodily state, an ascent through the sixty holy stages of the Bodhisattva path. He attains the mind-born body and may go anywhere without obstruction.

It is like a person speaking in sleep. Though that person has no separate awareness of what he is saying, his words already form coherent sounds and meaningful order, so that those who are awake can fully understand his speech.

This is what is called the region of the skandha of perceptions.

If the stirring of thought is exhausted, and floating imaginings are dissolved away, then within the awakened bright mind it is like dust and defilement being removed. The whole continuum of birth and death, from beginning to end, is then illumined in perfect completeness. This is called the

exhaustion of the skandha of perceptions.

At that point this person is able to transcend the turbidity of afflictions. In contemplating its source, he sees that interpenetrating false thought is its root.

Ānanda, when that good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, he may delight in perfect brightness and sharpen his refined thinking, greedily seeking skillful powers.

At that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth. That person is not aware that he has been possessed by a demon and declares of himself that he has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking clever powers, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma.

In an instant his form may appear as a bhikṣu before that person; or he may appear as Indra; or as a woman; or as a bhikṣuṇī; or, while resting in a dark room, his body may emit light.

The foolish person, deluded and confused, takes him for a Bodhisattva. Trusting his teaching and influence, his mind is shaken and led astray. He breaks the Buddha's discipline and secretly practices greed and lust.

From his mouth he delights in speaking of portents, disasters, and strange transformations. Or he says that the Thus Come One has appeared somewhere in the world. Or he speaks of kalpa-fires, or of war and weapons, spreading fear among people, causing the wealth and property of their households to be wasted for no reason.

This is called a strange ghost which, having grown old, has become a demon, and comes to trouble and confuse that person. When it has grown weary and its satisfaction is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the king's (legal) punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Ānanda, again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in wandering and roving, and he lets his refined thought fly outward, greedily seeking unusual experiences, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person too is unaware that he is possessed by a demon, and he also declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed

nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking such roaming experiences, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma. His own form does not change. But those listening to the teaching suddenly see their own bodies seated upon jeweled lotus flowers, their entire forms transformed into masses of purple-golden light. Everyone in the assembly of listeners experiences the same, attaining what they have never known before.

That foolish person, deluded and confused, takes him for a Bodhisattva. His mind is then loosened into sensual indulgence. He breaks the Buddha's discipline and secretly practices greed and lust.

From his mouth he delights in saying that the Buddhas are appearing in the world, that in such-and-such a place, such-and-such a person is the transformation-body of such-and-such a Buddha coming here; or that such-and-such a person is in fact such-and-such a Bodhisattva coming to transform beings in the human world. Because people see these things, their minds give rise to deep yearning and thirst; wrong views secretly arise, and the seed of all-knowledge is destroyed.

This is called a māyā-ghost which, having grown old, has become a demon, and comes to trouble and confuse that person. When it has grown weary and its satisfaction is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the ruler's (legal) punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in perfect union with the Bodhi Way, and he clarifies his refined thought while greedily seeking inner accord and correspondence, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person truly does not realize that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking such union, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma. In outward appearance, neither he nor those listening to the Dharma undergo any visible change. Yet it causes the listeners, before they have even heard the teaching, to have their hearts spontaneously open in awakening. Thought after thought shifts and changes. Some gain knowledge of former lives. Some know the minds of others. Some see the hells. Some know all kinds of good and evil happenings in the human world. Some speak verses from their mouths. Some recite sūtras on their own. Each is delighted and joyful, attaining what they have never known before.

That foolish person, deluded and confused, takes him for a

Bodhisattva. His mind becomes bound by clinging affection. He breaks the Buddha's discipline and secretly practices greed and lust.

From his mouth he delights in saying that Buddhas are great or small, that this Buddha is an earlier Buddha, that that Buddha is a later Buddha, and that among them there are true Buddhas and false Buddhas, male Buddhas and female Buddhas; and the same, he says, is true of Bodhisattvas. Because people see such things, they wash away and cast aside their original mind and easily enter into deviant awakening.

This is called a bewitching ghost which, having grown old, has become a demon, and comes to trouble and confuse that person. When it has grown weary and its satisfaction is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the ruler's (legal) punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in ontological studies, and he seeks to exhaustively examine the beginning and end of the transforming natures of things, sharpening his mind

and greedily seeking subtle discrimination and analysis, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person at first does not realize that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking the origin, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma. His body possesses an awe-inspiring spiritual force that overwhelms and subdues those who seek instruction. Those seated below him, even before hearing the Dharma, naturally submit in heart.

He tells all these people that the Buddha's nirvāṇa, Bodhi, and Dharma-body are none other than this present flesh-body of mine. Fathers and sons, generation after generation, giving rise to one another in succession—this, he says, is the Dharma-body abiding permanently without interruption. He points altogether to the present place and says that this is the Buddha-land. There is no separate pure dwelling, nor any golden form.

Those who believe and accept him lose their former aspirations. They surrender body and mind in reliance upon him, attaining what they have never known before. Such people are foolish and deluded and take him for a Bodhisattva and set their hearts on understanding him. As a result, they break the Buddha's discipline and secretly practice greed and lust. From his mouth he delights in saying that the eyes, ears,

nose, and tongue are all Pure Lands, and that the male and female sexual organs are the true place of Bodhi and Nirvāṇa. Those ignorant followers believe these filthy words.

This is called a malignant ghost practicing oppressive sorcery with poisonous insects who, having grown old, has become a demon, and comes to trouble and confuse that person. When it has grown weary and its satisfaction is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the ruler's (legal) punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in remote responses and hidden correspondences, and he turns his refined inquiry everywhere, greedily seeking mysterious resonance, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person originally does not realize that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking such responses, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma.

He is able to cause the listeners, for a brief time, to see his body as though it were a hundred or a thousand years old. Their hearts give rise to love and attachment, and they are unable to leave him. They serve him as slaves or attendants, making the four kinds of offerings without feeling any weariness. Each person under his seat is made to feel in his own heart that this teacher is a former master or an original good and wise friend. Another kind of attachment to the Dharma is then born, clinging like glue or lacquer, and they experience what they have never known before.

That foolish person, deluded and confused, takes him for a Bodhisattva. Inwardly drawing near to him, he breaks the Buddha's discipline and secretly practices greed and lust.

From his mouth he delights in saying, "In a former life, in such-and-such a birth, I first delivered such-and-such a person. At that time, he was my wife, my concubine, my brother, or my kin, and now I have come again to save him. I will take you with me to such-and-such a world to make offerings to such-and-such a Buddha." Or else he says that there is another great Heaven of Light, where a Buddha dwells, and that it is the resting place of all Thus Come Ones.

Those who do not understand believe this empty falsehood and lose their original mind.

This is called a pestilential ghost which, having grown old, has become a demon, and comes to trouble and confuse that person. When it has grown weary and its satisfaction

is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the ruler's (legal) punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in going ever deeper, restraining himself bitterly and laboriously, loving to dwell in hidden stillness and greedily seeking silence and seclusion, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person originally does not realize that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking hidden stillness, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma.

He causes those who listen to know each one's former karma. Or, in that very place, he may say to someone, "Though you are not yet dead, you have already become an animal." Then he commands another person to step behind him on his tail, and immediately that person is unable to rise. At this, the whole assembly bows down and submits in heart.

If anyone merely gives rise to a thought, he already knows its beginning. Outside the Buddha's discipline, he further imposes bitter ascetic hardships. He slanders bhikṣus, reviles the community, and exposes people's affairs without avoiding ridicule or blame.

From his mouth he delights in speaking of fortunes and disasters before they happen, and when the time arrives, not the slightest detail proves false.

This is a great powerful ghost which, having grown old, has become a demon, and comes to trouble and confuse that person. When it has grown weary and its satisfaction is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the king's punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in knowledge and views, and he painstakingly investigates and seeks, greedily pursuing knowledge of former lives, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person is utterly unaware that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking such knowledge, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma.

For no apparent reason, right there in the place where he teaches Dharma, this person may obtain a great precious jewel. At times the demon transforms itself into an animal, holding in its mouth that jewel, along with various treasures, books, talismans, documents, and other strange objects, first handing them to that person and later attaching them to his body. Or it may induce the listeners to bury such things underground, where a bright moon-jewel then illumines that place. All the hearers, encountering such things, experience what they have never known before.

Such a person often eats herbs and medicinal plants, not taking fine foods. At times he may eat only one sesame seed and one grain of wheat a day, yet his body remains full and plump because he is sustained by the demon's power. He slanders bhikṣus, reviles the assembly, and does not avoid ridicule or blame.

From his mouth he delights in speaking of treasures in other lands, of the hidden places where sages and worthies of the ten directions are concealed. Those who follow after him often go on to see strange and unusual people.

This is called the demonization of mountain and forest spirits,

earth spirits, city gods, river and mountain spirits, and the like, after they have grown old. Some of them proclaim lust and break the Buddha's precepts, secretly indulging in the five desires together with those who attend upon them. Others appear highly vigorous, eating only grasses and trees. Their conduct is never fixed; all of it is to trouble and confuse that person. When the demon has grown weary and its satisfaction is complete, it leaves the other person's body. Then both disciple and teacher fall into the hands of the king's punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Further, good man, when the skandha of sensations becomes empty and subtle, free from disturbing false thoughts, and perfect concentration shines forth, if within samadhi he comes to delight in spiritual powers and all kinds of transformations, probing into the source of such transformations and greedily seeking miraculous power, then at that time a heavenly demon, waiting for his opportunity, sends a flying essence to possess another person, who then speaks Dharma and scriptures by mouth.

That person truly does not realize that he is possessed by a demon, yet he also claims that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvana. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking psychic powers, spreads a seat, and teaches the Dharma. Sometimes he holds a fiery light in his hand,

gathers that light with his hand, and places portions of it upon the heads of the fourfold assembly who are listening. Flames then appear above the heads of those listeners, each several feet high, yet without heat, and they do not burn at all. Or he walks upon water as though on level ground. Or he sits motionless in empty space. Or he enters a bottle. Or stays inside a bag. He passes through windows and walls without obstruction. Only against blades and weapons does he lack complete freedom.

He says of himself that he is a Buddha. Dressed in white robes, he receives bows from bhikshus. He slanders dhyana and the Vinaya, curses and reviles the assembly, exposes people's private affairs, and feels no shame before ridicule or reproach. His mouth is always speaking of supernatural powers and free mastery. At times he even causes people to glimpse Buddha-lands nearby. Yet this is ghostly power misleading people; it is not real. He praises the practice of lust and does not condemn coarse conduct. He treats indecent and obscene acts as though they were the transmission of the Dharma.

This is called a powerful essence-spirit of heaven and earth, or an essence of mountain, sea, wind, river, or soil, or else some spirit-entity from grasses and trees that has accumulated potency through the ages. It may also be a dragon-spirit; or an immortal whose span has ended and who revives to become such a spirit; or one whose allotted term as an immortal has come to its end, who by reckoning of years should die, yet whose form does not dissolve, and is then attached by some

other strange being. In old age it becomes a demon and troubles this person.

When the demon grows weary and leaves the person's body, both disciples and teacher often fall into trouble with the authorities. You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, confused and deluded, you do not recognize it, you will fall into the Avici Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination, then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in entering extinction (nirvana), and he investigates the nature of transformation, greedily seeking profound emptiness, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person never realizes that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking emptiness, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma.

In the midst of the great assembly, his form may suddenly vanish, so that the crowd can no longer see him. Then he emerges again abruptly out of emptiness, appearing and disappearing at will. Or he may show his body transparent like crystal. Or, when he lets down his hands and feet, they may give off the fragrance of sandalwood. Or his urine and

excrement may appear like thick stone-honey.

He slanders and destroys the precepts and treats those who have left home with contempt. From his mouth he constantly proclaims that there are no cause and no effect; that once one dies, one is forever extinguished, with no further body to come, and no distinction of ordinary and holy. Although he speaks of emptiness and stillness, he secretly practices lust. Those who submit to his desire are likewise made to adopt the mind of emptiness and to reject cause and effect.

This is called the demonization of the subtle essences of eclipsed sun and moon, of gold and jade, of numinous fungi and herbs, of qilin (auspicious legendary creature), phoenixes, tortoises, cranes, and such beings, which, after living for thousands upon thousands of years without dying, become numinous and appear within the lands of the world. When they grow old, they become demons and come to trouble and confuse that person. When they have grown weary and their satisfaction is complete, they leave the other person's body. Then disciple and teacher alike mostly fall into the hands of the king's punishment.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Again, when a good man, with the skandha of sensations become subtle and empty, is no longer troubled by deviant thoughts, and perfect concentration gives rise to illumination,

then, in samādhi, if his mind delights in long life, and he bitterly and laboriously investigates the subtle earthly transformation, greedily seeking endless years, abandoning birth in segments and hoping all at once for the constant abiding of a more subtle transformed form, at that time a heavenly demon, watching and waiting, gains its opportunity. It sends forth its essence and attaches itself to another person, who then speaks Dharma from his mouth.

That person never realizes that he is possessed by a demon, and he too declares that he himself has attained unsurpassed nirvāṇa. He comes to the place of that good man who is seeking continued life, spreads a seat, and teaches Dharma.

He delights in speaking of going to and returning from other regions without obstruction. Or he may travel ten thousand miles and return in an instant, bringing back objects from that distant place. Or, in one house, within the distance of only a few steps, he may cause someone going from the east side to the west wall to be unable to arrive there even after years of hurried walking. Because of such things, people give rise to deep faith and come to suspect that the Buddha is present before them.

From his mouth he constantly says, “All living beings in the ten directions are my children. I gave birth to all Buddhas. I brought forth the worlds. I am the original Buddha, appearing in the world naturally, not attained through cultivation.”

This is called the world-abiding Demon King of the Sixth

Heaven, which sends its retinue—such as Caṇḍa and other such beings, together with the Viśa lads of the Four Heavenly Kings, beings who have not brought forth the Bodhi-mind—to take advantage of that empty brightness and consume the cultivator's vital essence and energy.

Or, without involving any outer teacher, that cultivator may personally see such a being and hear it say, "I am a vajra-spirit who has come to bestow long life upon you." It may manifest the body of a beautiful woman and arouse flourishing lustful desire. Before a year has passed, the person's liver and brain are dried up. His speech becomes muttering and incoherent, so that to those who hear it, he sounds like some uncanny spirit. The people before him, not yet understanding what has happened, mostly fall into the ruler's (legal) punishment. Before sentence is even carried out, he has already withered and died. The demon so troubles and confuses that person that it brings him all the way to destruction.

You should awaken to this beforehand and not enter the wheel of rebirth. If, in delusion and confusion, you do not recognize it, then you will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

Ānanda, you should know: these ten kinds of demons, in the Dharma-Declining Age, will join my Sangha to cultivate the Way. Some will attach themselves to human bodies; some will manifest their own forms. All will say that they have already accomplished right and perfect enlightenment. They will praise lust and destroy the Buddha's discipline.

These evil demon-teachers and their demonic disciples will pass on lust from one to another. In this way these evil essences and spirits will bewitch their hearts and bowels. In the nearer case this may continue for nine lives; often it will extend beyond a hundred generations, causing those who truly cultivate to become altogether members of the demons' retinue. At the end of life, they will certainly become the subjects of the demons. Losing right and universal knowledge, they will fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

You need not yet hasten to take up final quiescent extinction. Even if you attain the stage of no more learning, you should remain by vow and enter into that Final Dharma age, arousing great compassion to rescue and deliver living beings of upright mind and deep faith, causing them not to cling to demons, but to attain right knowledge and right views.

I have now delivered you and brought you beyond birth and death. If you follow the Buddha's words, this is called repaying the Buddha's kindness.

Ānanda, these ten kinds of manifest states appearing in dhyāna all belong to the skandha of perception. Because the mind's functioning interacts in various ways, these events appear.

Living beings are stubborn and deluded, and do not rightly measure themselves. When such causes and conditions arise before them, they are confused and do not recognize their own delusion but instead claim that they have ascended to

sainthood. Once this great false speech is accomplished, they fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

All of you must take the Thus Come One's words and, after my extinction (nirvana), transmit and reveal them in the Dharma-Declining age. Cause all living beings everywhere to awaken to this meaning. Do not allow heavenly demons to seize such an opportunity. Protect and uphold them, shelter and guard them, so that they may accomplish the unsurpassed Way.

X

Ānanda, when that good man, in cultivating samādhi, has exhausted the skandha of perceptions, then in his ordinary state dreams and imaginings disappear, and waking and sleeping become one and the same. The light of awareness is empty and still, like a cloudless sky. No longer do there remain the coarse shadowy traces of former sense-objects.

When he contemplates the great earth, the mountains, and the rivers of the world, they are like a bright mirror: when things come, nothing clings; when they pass, no trace remains. Empty in reception, yet responsive in illumination, he has utterly put an end to old habits. There remains only one pure and essential reality.

From this point, the very root-source of arising and ceasing begins to be laid bare. He sees all the twelve kinds of beings throughout the ten directions and fully exhausts their categories. Though he has not yet penetrated the origin and course of each one's life, he sees the common ground of their arising. It is like heat-haze shimmering and quivering in the open air. This is the ultimate hinge-point of the floating sense-faculties and sense-objects. This is what is called the region of the skandha of formations.

If the original nature of this clear, shimmering movement enters back into its primal stillness, and once stilled, returns the primal habits to quiescence—like waves subsiding and

becoming clear water—then this is called the exhaustion of the skandha of mental formations.

At that point, this person is able to transcend the turbidity of living beings. In contemplating its source, he sees that hidden and subtle false thought is its root.

Ānanda, you should know that when these good men, who in śamatha have attained right knowledge, gather and clarify the proper mind so that the ten kinds of heavenly demons can find no access, they are then able to press on with subtle investigation and fully probe the root of the various classes of living beings.

When, within those classes, the source of arising is laid bare, and one contemplates that hidden, subtle, all-pervading, restless moving source, then if one begins to form judgments and calculations within that all-pervading source, such a person falls into two kinds of theories of causelessness.

The first is this: such a person sees the root as without cause. Why? Because, once he has fully broken through the mechanism of arising, he rides upon the eight hundred merits of the eye faculty and sees all living beings throughout eighty thousand kalpas, with the currents of karma winding and circling, dying here and being born there. He sees only living beings revolving in saṃsāra within that range. Beyond eighty thousand kalpas, all is dark and there is nothing he can perceive. He therefore comes to this conclusion: all these living beings in the world throughout the ten directions

have, for these eighty thousand kalpas, existed of themselves without cause. By this reckoning he loses right and universal knowledge, falls into the way of outsiders, and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

The second is this: such a person sees the end-state as without cause. Why? Because, having already seen the root of their birth, he concludes that humans are born from humans, birds are born from birds, crows have always been black, swans have always been white, humans and gods have always stood upright, and animals have always gone on all fours. White was not made by washing; black was not made by dyeing. For eighty thousand kalpas there has been no change. When this present form comes to an end, it will still be the same. And since I have never seen Bodhi, how could there be any such thing as attaining Bodhi? Therefore, he decides that all the forms now present are fundamentally without cause. By this reckoning he loses right and universal knowledge, falls into the way of outsiders, and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the first heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment of the doctrine of causelessness.

Ānanda, within this samādhi, when those good men gather and clarify the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, within what is perfectly pervasive and seemingly constant, they begin to form judgments and speculations, such a person falls into four theories of

universal permanence.

First, this person exhausts the nature of mind and objects and sees both spheres as without cause. In cultivation he becomes able to know that, throughout twenty thousand kalpas, all living beings in the ten directions, in all their arising and ceasing, have only gone in cycles and have never been lost or dispersed; and so he reckons them to be permanent.

Second, this person exhausts the source of the four great elements and sees the four natures as abiding constantly. In cultivation he becomes able to know that, throughout forty thousand kalpas, all living beings in the ten directions, in all their arising and ceasing, have all remained constant in substance and have never been lost or dispersed; and so he reckons them to be permanent.

Third, this person exhausts the six faculties, the grasping of manas, and the original source within mind, intention, and consciousness that underlies them. Since that nature seems constant and enduring, in cultivation he becomes able to know that, throughout eighty thousand kalpas, all living beings, though revolving in cycles, have never been lost, but have from the beginning abided permanently. Because he has exhausted that nature which does not seem to be lost, he reckons it to be permanent.

Fourth, this person has already exhausted the source of the skandha of thought, and in the life-process he no longer sees any flow, stopping, or movement. The mind of arising

and ceasing in the skandha of thought has now been forever extinguished. Within that principle there naturally appears what does not arise and does not cease. Because his mind measures it in this way, he reckons it to be permanent.

By this reckoning of permanence he loses right and universal knowledge, falls into the way of outsiders, and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the second heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment of the doctrine of universal permanence.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, with respect to self and others, they begin to form judgments and speculations, such a person falls into four inverted views: one part impermanent, one part permanent.

First, this person contemplates the wondrous bright mind pervading the worlds of the ten directions, and, in deep stillness, takes it to be the ultimate divine self. From this he concludes that his self pervades the ten directions, fixed, bright, and unmoving. All living beings are born and die within my mind. Therefore, my mind-nature is called permanent, while those that arise and perish are truly of an impermanent nature.

Second, this person does not contemplate his own mind, but instead surveys throughout the ten directions lands as numerous as the sands of the Ganges. Wherever he sees kalpas coming to destruction, he calls that the ultimate nature of impermanence. Wherever kalpas do not come to destruction, he calls that the ultimate permanent.

Third, this person separately contemplates his own mind as exquisitely subtle and minute, like fine dust. It flows throughout the ten directions, yet its nature does not shift or change. It is able to cause this body to be born and perish at once. That unbroken nature he calls the permanence of the self. All birth and death that flow forth from it he calls impermanent nature.

Fourth, this person knows that the skandha of mental formations is exhausted and sees the flow of the skandha of formations. Since the skandha of mental formations is always flowing, he reckons it to be permanent in nature. Form, sensations, and perceptions have now already been extinguished, and he therefore calls them impermanent.

By this reckoning of one part impermanent and one part permanent, he falls into the way of heretics and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the third heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the doctrine of partial permanence.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly

gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement - if, with respect to distinctions of stages and limits, they begin to form judgments and calculations, such a person falls into four theories of finitude.

First, this person mentally calculates the source of arising, seeing its flowing function as never ceasing. He reckons what is past and what is future as having an end and so calls them finite. But he reckons the continuing mind as endless and so calls it infinite.

Second, this person observes eighty thousand kalpas and sees living beings there. Before those eighty thousand kalpas, all is still, with nothing heard and nothing seen. Where there is nothing heard and seen, he calls it infinite. Where living beings are present, he calls it finite.

Third, this person reckons that his self is universally knowing and thereby has attained a boundless nature. All other people appear within my knowing. Yet my knowing has never appeared within other people's knowing. Therefore, he says that they do not possess a boundless mind, but only a finite nature.

Fourth, this person exhausts the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations. By the mental paths of what he sees, he measures and speculates that, within the body of every living being, all are half born and half extinguished. He further

concludes that in the entire world, everything that exists is one half finite and one-half infinite.

By this reckoning of finitude and infinitude, he falls into the way of outsiders and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the fourth heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment of the doctrine of finitude.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, within knowing and seeing, they begin to form judgments and calculations, such a person falls into four kinds of inverted views: evasive confusion regarding the deathless, and pervasive fabrication of empty theories.

First, this person contemplates the source of transformations. Where he sees movement and flow, he calls it change. Where he sees continuity, he calls it permanence. Where there is seeing of an object, he calls it birth. Where there is no seeing of that object, he calls it extinction. The cause of continuity, where the nature does not break off, he calls increase. Within continuity itself, where there is some point of separation, he calls decrease. Each arising place he calls being. Places where one thing vanishes into another he calls non-being. Though in principle he surveys them all together, in the working of his mind he sees them separately. If someone seeking the Dharma comes and asks him the meaning, he answers: “At present I

am also born and also extinguished; also, existent and also non-existent; also increasing and also decreasing." At all times he throws his words into confusion, so that the person before him loses the thread and meaning of the teaching.

Second, this person closely contemplates his mind and sees that mutually there is nowhere at all. Because of this, he obtains a kind of proof from non-being. If someone comes to question him, he answers with only one word, saying only "No." Aside from "no," he says nothing else.

Third, this person closely contemplates his mind and sees that each thing has its own place. Because of this, he obtains a kind of proof from being. If someone comes to question him, he answers with only one word, saying only "Yes." Aside from "yes," he says nothing else.

Fourth, this person sees both being and non-being, but because the objects of his contemplation branch out and divide, his mind also becomes confused. If someone comes to question him, he answers: "What is also being is just non-being; and within non-being, it is not the case that there is also being." In every way he speaks evasively and chaotically, allowing no one to press him to the end.

By this reckoning, through evasive confusion and empty nothingness, he falls into the way of outsiders and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the fifth heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the

four inverted natures, the evasive confusion regarding the deathless, and the pervasive fabrication of empty theories.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, in regard to the endless flowing process, they begin to form judgments and calculations, such a person falls into the inverted view of giving rise to the notion that after death there are determinate forms.

Some cling to the body itself and say, "Form is the self."

Some see the self as complete and all-encompassing, containing and pervading the lands, and say, "The self possesses form."

Some say that the conditions before them turn and return in accordance with the self, and therefore say, "Form belongs to the self."

Some further say that the self continues in the flowing process and therefore say, "The self is within form."

In all such cases they conclude that after death there are determinate forms. In this way, as the reasoning turns in circles, there arise sixteen such aspects.

From this, some go on to conclude that affliction is ultimately

real, and Bodhi is ultimately real, and that the two natures run side by side, each never touching the other.

By this reckoning that after death there is existence with form, they fall into the way of outsiders and confuse the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the sixth heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment, within the five skandhas, of the doctrine that after death there are determinate forms—a theory based on the inverted mind.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, regarding form, feeling, and thought, which have already been removed and extinguished, they begin to form judgments and calculations, such a person falls into the inverted view that after death there are no determinate characteristics.

Seeing that form has perished, he concludes that the body has no basis. Observing that thought has perished, he concludes that the mind has nothing to which it is tied. Knowing that feeling has perished, he concludes that there is no further continuity or connection. Since the nature of the skandhas is dissipated and scattered, even if there should still be some life-principle, without feeling and thought it would be no different from grass and wood.

If even this present substance cannot truly be grasped, then after death how could there be any further characteristics at all?

Because of this, he scrutinizes and concludes that after death all characteristics are absent. In this way, as the reasoning turns in circles, there arise eight kinds of no-characteristics.

From this, some go on to conclude that Nirvāṇa, its cause and its fruit, are all entirely empty; that there are only names, and in the end, all is utter extinction.

By this reckoning that after death there is nothing, they fall into the way of outsiders and confuse the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the seventh heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment, within the five skandhas, of the doctrine that after death there are no characteristics—a theory based on the inverted mind.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, while the skandha of mental formations still remains and sensations and perceptions have both been extinguished, they make a double reckoning of both being and non-being, and in their own substance and characteristics mutually refute one another, such a person falls into the inverted doctrine that after death there is neither being nor

non-being.

Within form, sensations, and perceptions, he sees being and yet non-being. Within the flowing movement of mental formations, he contemplates non-being and yet not non-being. In this way, turning in circles and exhausting the skandhas and their fields, he arrives at eight kinds of "both neither" characteristics.

Whichever condition he seizes upon, he says that after death there are characteristics and yet no characteristics. He further reckons that because the nature of all formations shifts and distorts, his mind gives rise to a kind of penetrative understanding. Being and non-being are both denied; emptiness and reality both lose their place.

By this reckoning that after death there is neither one nor the other, because the final state is dark and confused and cannot be spoken of, he falls into the way of outsiders and confuses the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the eighth heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment, within the five skandhas, of the doctrine that after death is neither being nor non-being—a theory based on his deluded mind.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source

of movement—if, with regard to what comes afterward and afterward, they reckon that there is no further arising, such a person falls into seven kinds of annihilationism/nihilism.

Some reckon that when the body perishes, all is extinguished.

Some reckon that when desire is exhausted, all is extinguished.

Some reckon that when suffering is exhausted, all is extinguished.

Some reckon that when the height of bliss is exhausted, all is extinguished.

Some reckon that when the height of equanimous renunciation is exhausted, all is extinguished.

Thus, as such reasoning turns in circles, they exhaust the seven boundaries and conclude that whatever is present is extinguished, and once extinguished there is nothing further.

By this reckoning that after death there is annihilation, they fall into the way of outsiders and confuse the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the ninth heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment, within the five skandhas, of the doctrine of annihilation after death—a theory based on his inverted mind.

Again, within this samādhi, when those good men firmly

gather and stabilize the proper mind so that demons can find no access, and they probe to the root of the various classes of beings, contemplating that hidden, subtle, ever-restless source of movement—if, with regard to what comes afterward and afterward, they reckon that there is still arising, such a person falls into five doctrines of nirvāṇa.

Some take refuge in the Desire Realm as the proper basis of transformation, because, seeing a kind of rounded brightness there, they give rise to love and attachment.

Some take the First Dhyāna as nirvāṇa, because in its nature there is no sorrow.

Some take the Second Dhyāna as nirvāṇa, because in the mind there is no suffering.

Some take the Third Dhyāna as nirvāṇa, because there is the utmost delight following upon it.

Some take the Fourth Dhyāna as nirvāṇa, because both suffering and pleasure are gone, and because it does not receive the nature of saṃsāric arising and ceasing.

Thus they mistake the heavens of the conditioned realm for the unconditioned and regard these five places of repose as the supreme pure basis.

In this way, as their reasoning turns in circles, they make these five places into the ultimate.

By this reckoning, they establish five presently manifest nirvāṇas, fall into the way of outsiders, and confuse the nature of Bodhi.

This is called the tenth heretic (non-Buddhist) view: the establishment, within the five skandhas, of the doctrine of five presently manifest nirvāṇas—a theory based on his inverted mind.

Ānanda, these ten kinds of mad interpretations arising in dhyāna are all due to the mutual interaction of the mind's functioning within the skandha of mental formations, and so these mistaken awakenings appear.

Living beings are stubborn and deluded, and do not measure themselves rightly. When such states appear before them, they mistake delusion for realization and declare themselves to have ascended to sainthood.

When this great false speech is accomplished, they fall into the Unintermittent Hell.

All of you must take the Thus Come One's words and, after my extinction, transmit and reveal them in the Dharma-Declining age. Cause all living beings everywhere to awaken clearly to this meaning. Do not let mind-demons arise of themselves and create deep offenses.

Protect and uphold them, cover and guard them, put an end to wrong views, and teach their body and mind to open to the

true meaning of awakening, so that on the unsurpassed Way they do not encounter branching deviations.

Do not let the mind, hoping for a little attainment, take that little as sufficient.

Become for them the pure guiding mark of the Great Enlightened King.

Ānanda, when that good man, cultivating samādhi, has exhausted the skandha of mental formations, then the natures of the worlds—that hidden, pure, restless motion, the common life-impulse shared among beings—suddenly collapse, and the subtle knots and bonds are shattered. The deep channels of karmic recompense in the pudgala (sentient beings) are cut off from all responses.

Toward the heaven of Nirvāṇa, he is about to awaken greatly. It is like a cock crowing before dawn: when one looks toward the east, a faint brightness of color is already there.

The six faculties are empty and still, no longer racing outward. Within and without all is limpid and bright; he enters where there is nowhere to enter. He penetrates deeply the twelve kinds of beings throughout the ten directions, and the original source by which they receive life.

He sees the source of grasping, yet the various kinds no longer summon him. In the worlds of the ten directions, he has already obtained their common basis. The subtle essence

no longer sinks but reveals what is hidden and secret. This is what is called the region of the skandha of consciousness.

If, within all those summonings, he has already obtained that common ground, and the six gates are worn away and dissolved, so that closing and opening are brought to fulfillment, then seeing and hearing become contiguous and interpenetrating, and their mutual functioning becomes pure. The worlds of the ten directions, together with body and mind, are like vaidūrya crystal, bright and transparent within and without. This is called the exhaustion of the skandha of consciousness.

At that point this person is able to transcend the turbidity of life-span. In contemplating its source, he sees that shadowy, empty, and formless inverted false thinking is its root.

Ānanda, you should know: when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations and has returned consciousness to its source, he has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete. He may cause the barriers among his own faculties to open and unite, and may also share awareness with the various classes of beings throughout the ten directions. His knowing and awareness interpenetrate in dim subtlety, and he is able to enter the perfect source.

If, regarding that to which he returns, he sets up a true and permanent cause, and gives rise to a superior understanding,

then this person falls into the grasping of cause and what is caused. He becomes a companion of those who take the kalpila's dark primal truth as the place to which all returns. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the first case: establishing as mind that which is obtained and making the fruit of return into attainment. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of an externalist path.

Ānanda, again, when this good man has exhausted the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations and has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, regarding that to which he returns, he seizes it as his own substance, and says that all beings within the twelve classes throughout the bounds of empty space all flow forth as one kind from within my own body, and so gives rise to a superior understanding, then this person falls into the grasping of what can act and what cannot. He becomes a companion of Maheśvara, who manifests a boundless body. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the second case: establishing the agent (of acts) as mind and making the fruit of agency into attainment. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of the Great-Pride Heaven, the doctrine of a self-pervading all in fullness.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, regarding that to which he returns, he posits something on which to rely, and comes to suppose that his own body and mind flow forth from it, and that the emptiness of the ten directions all arises from it, then, taking that very ground from which all arises and issues forth, he interprets it as the true and permanent body, free from arising and ceasing.

In the midst of what is still within arising and ceasing, he prematurely reckons it to be permanent. Already confused about the unborn, he is equally deluded about arising and ceasing. Dwelling settled in this sunken confusion, and giving rise to a superior understanding, this person falls into the grasping that takes the impermanent for the permanent. He takes Īśvara as his companion. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the third case: establishing a mind of causal reliance and bringing about the fruit of false reckoning. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of inverted wholeness.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, with regard to what is known, because that knowing seems all-

pervasive and complete, he establishes an interpretation based on that knowing, then he says that the grasses and trees throughout the ten directions all possess sentience and are no different from human beings. Trees and plants become humans; when humans die, they again become the grasses and trees of the ten directions.

Making no distinctions in this all-pervasive knowing, and giving rise to a superior understanding, this person falls into the grasping that confuses knowing with not-knowing. He becomes a companion of those who maintain that all things are conscious. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the fourth case: taking all-pervasive knowing as mind and bringing about a false and mistaken fruit. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of inverted knowing.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, within the interpenetration and mutual functioning of the faculties, he has already gained a kind of accordance, then amid the all-arising of perfect transformations he seeks the brightness of fire, delights in the purity of water, loves the all-pervading movement of wind, and contemplates the accomplishment of earth. Each in turn he reveres and serves. Taking these various material elements as the original cause from which

things arise, he establishes an interpretation of permanence.

Such a person falls into the grasping of arising and non-arising. He becomes a companion of the various Kāśyapas and Brahmans who, laboring with diligent minds and toiling bodies, venerate fire and worship water in the hope of escaping birth and death. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the fifth case: clinging to acts of worship, losing the mind in following things, establishing a false cause to seek, and hoping for a false fruit. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of inverted transformation.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, within that perfect luminosity, he reckons the emptiness within the brightness to be ultimate, and does not regard the host of transformations as what is to be extinguished, but instead takes dependence upon an everlasting extinction as the refuge to which he should return, and thereby gives rise to a superior understanding, then this person falls into the grasping of returning to what is no true refuge.

He becomes a companion of those in the Heaven of No-Thought who cling to emptiness. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the sixth case: taking perfect emptiness as mind and bringing about the fruit of falling into void extinction. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of annihilation.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, within that perfect constancy, he clings to the body as permanently abiding, wishing it to endure together with that perfect essential wholeness, long without decline or passing away, and thus gives rise to a superior understanding, then this person falls into the grasping of craving what ought not to be craved.

He becomes a companion of the various Asitas who seek long life. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the seventh case: clinging to the root of life, establishing a fixed and false cause, and heading toward the toilsome fruit of long duration. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of vain prolongation.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if,

contemplating the mutual interpenetration of life, he deliberately retains the toils of the dust, fearing that they may be altogether extinguished, then at that point he sits in lotus palaces, widely manifests the seven treasures, increases ever more jeweled maidens, and indulges his mind without restraint. If he gives rise to a superior understanding in this way, then this person falls into the grasping that takes what is not truly real as the true.

He becomes a companion of Takikara. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the eighth case: bringing forth a false cause of thought and establishing the blazing fruit of defiling dust. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of heavenly demons.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, within the luminosity of life, he begins to distinguish the refined from the coarse, to decide the true from the false, and to assess the mutual requital of cause and effect, seeking only responsive realization while turning away from the path of purity - that is, seeing suffering, cutting off accumulation, realizing cessation, and cultivating the path - then, once he abides in cessation, he comes to rest there and no longer advances further. If he gives rise to a superior understanding in this way, then this person falls into the state of a fixed-

nature śrāvaka.

He becomes a companion of those monks who have heard little and of those inflated with overweening pride. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the ninth case: taking perfect subtle responsiveness as mind and accomplishing the fruit that tends toward quiescence. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of attachment to emptiness.

Again, when this good man has consummated the realization of the emptiness of the skandha of mental formations, has already extinguished arising and ceasing, yet the subtle wonder of quiescent extinction is not yet complete—if, within the perfectly fused, pure, and luminous awareness, he arouses a probing into profound subtlety, and thereupon establishes nirvāṇa and goes no further, and thus gives rise to a superior understanding, then this person falls into the state of a fixed-nature pratyekabuddha.

He becomes a companion of those solitary realizers and those of conditioned awakening who do not convert their aspirations to the Great Vehicle. He is confused about the Buddha's Bodhi and loses right knowledge and insight.

This is called the tenth case: taking a false apprehension of perfect awakening as mind and accomplishing the fruit of

tranquil luminosity. He turns away from perfect penetration, departs from the city of Nirvāṇa, and gives rise to the seed of a perfect bright awakening that does not transform others.

Ānanda, these ten kinds of states in dhyāna, in which one goes mad midway, all arise because, relying on delusion and confusion, one gives rise to the certitude of full realization in what is not yet complete. All of them are due to the mutual interaction of the mind's functioning within the skandha of consciousness, and so these states arise.

Living beings are stubborn and deluded, and do not rightly measure themselves. When such states appear before them, each, according to the deluded tendencies and attachments first cherished in the mind, comes to rest there on his own. He takes it to be the final place of peace and return. He declares himself to have fully attained unsurpassed Bodhi. Once this great false speech is accomplished, then when the karma induced by externalist or demonic deviation reaches its end, he falls into the Unintermittent Hell. As for śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, they do not advance further.

All of you must hold firmly in mind and uphold the Thus Come One's way. Take this Dharma-Approach and, after my extinction, transmit and reveal it to those in the Dharma-Declining age. Cause all living beings everywhere to awaken clearly to this meaning. Do not let demons of false views cause them to create deep offenses of sinking and ruin. Protect them, steady them, pity them, and rescue them. Extinguish wrong conditions and cause their body and mind

to enter the Buddha's knowledge and vision. From the very beginning to full accomplishment, let them not encounter branching paths.

This Dharma-Approach is the very one by which the Thus Come Ones of former ages, as numerous as fine dust throughout kalpas as countless as the sands of the Ganges, opened their minds and attained the unsurpassed Way.

If the skandha of consciousness is exhausted, then before you, the various faculties will function interchangeably. From that mutual functioning, one is able to enter the Bodhisattva's Vajra Dry-Wisdom. Within the perfect, bright, essential mind, transformation unfolds. It is like pure crystal containing a precious moon within. Thus, one transcends the Ten Faiths, the Ten Abodes, the Ten Practices, the Ten Dedications, the Four Preliminary Practices, the Bodhisattva's Vajra Ten Grounds, and the perfect brightness of Equal Enlightenment, entering the Thus Come One's wondrous ocean of adornment. Bodhi is brought to fullness, returning to where there is nothing to be attained.

This is the subtle analysis, in śamatha and vipaśyanā, by the World-Honored Ones, the Buddhas of the past, of these fine and subtle demonic events through awakened clarity.

When demonic states appear before you, if you can recognize them, the stains of the mind are washed away and you do not fall into wrong views. The skandha-demons are extinguished, the heavenly demons are shattered, mighty ghosts and spirits

lose their force and flee, and goblins, sprites, and strange apparitions can no longer arise. Straight on to Bodhi, there will be no deficiency at all. Even those of lower capacity who continue to advance will not become confused or darkened in their minds concerning Great Nirvāṇa.

If, in the Dharma-Declining age, there are dull-witted beings who do not yet understand dhyāna and do not know how to explain the Dharma, yet delight in cultivating samādhi, and you fear that they may fall into error, then with one mind urge them to uphold my Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra. If they are not yet able to recite it, then write it out and place it in the meditation hall, or carry it on the body. Then none of the demons will be able to disturb them.

You should reverently honor this as the final instruction of the Thus Come Ones of the ten directions for the complete cultivation and final advance.

Ānanda at once rose from his seat. Having heard the Buddha's instruction and admonition, he bowed his head at the Buddha's feet, received it reverently, and held it in memory without loss. Then, in the midst of the great assembly, he again said to the Buddha:

"As the Buddha has said, within the appearances of the five skandhas, the five kinds of falseness take deluded thinking as their root. We, however, in our ordinary state, have not yet received from the Thus Come One such subtle and detailed instruction.

And again, with regard to these five skandhas, are they extinguished all together, or are they exhausted in sequence? For these five layers, what marks the boundary of each?

We only pray that the Thus Come One will proclaim great compassion and make clear these matters for the pure eyes of this great assembly, and become, for all living beings in the Final Age, eyes for the future."

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

"The pure, wondrous, luminous, perfectly true essence of fundamental enlightenment is originally complete and undefiled. It does not abide in birth and death, nor in any of the defiling dusts. Even empty space itself arises because of false thought.

This primal enlightenment—wondrously bright, truly essential—is wrongly made the basis from which all the worlds of vessels and lands appear.

It is like Yajñadatta, who, losing sight of his own head, mistook its reflection for the real thing.

Delusion has no original cause. Yet within false thought one sets up the nature of causes and conditions. Those who are confused about causes and conditions speak instead of spontaneity or naturalness.

Even the nature of empty space is in truth born of illusion.

Causes and conditions and so-called naturalness are all nothing but calculations made by the deluded minds of living beings."

Ānanda, when one knows that delusion is what gives rise to these things, then one speaks of the false causes and conditions of delusion. But if delusion itself has no original basis, then those supposed causes and conditions of delusion are in the end utterly without reality. How much less can those who do not understand this, and who speculate about "naturalness," be right.

Therefore, the Thus Come One has made it clear to you that the original cause of the five skandhas is the same in every case: all are nothing but false thinking.

Your body first arose through the thought of your father and mother. If your own mind were not itself bound up with thought, then you could not have come and transmitted life within that field of thought.

As I said before, if the mind thinks of the taste of sour plums, saliva is produced in the mouth. If the mind thinks of climbing to a height, a soreness arises in the soles of the feet. Yet the cliff is not really there, and the sour thing has not yet come. Your body certainly cannot be of the same unreal kind as those empty thoughts. How then can saliva come forth merely because sourness is spoken of?

Therefore, you should know that your present material body

is called the first false thought, the solidified one.

And just as the mind that imagines standing at a height can make your body truly feel the sensation of soreness and trembling, so, because feeling arises from causes, it can stir the physical body. What now appears before you as agreeable benefit and adverse harm—these two appearing in turn and driving you on—is called the second false thought, the illusory brightness.

Because your reflections and considerations cause your physical body to respond—though the body is not of the same kind as thought—how is it that your body follows wherever thought directs it? All kinds of images are taken up; mind gives rise to them, and the form responds, in accordance with thought. When awake, this is the thinking mind; when asleep, it becomes the various dreams. Thus, your thoughts and ideas, stirring false emotion, are called the third false thought, the one of interpenetrating flow.

The principle of transformation does not remain fixed. On and on it moves in secret change: the nails grow, the hair springs forth, the vigor wanes, the face wrinkles. Day and night succeed one another, yet one has never been aware of it.

Ānanda, if this were not you, then how could your body undergo change? But if it truly were you, then why are you not aware of it?

Thus, the ceaseless movement of your various mental

formations, thought after thought without stopping, is called the fourth false thought, the hidden and subtle one.

And again, that place in you which is bright, pure, still, and unmoving—that which you call constant—does not go beyond seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing within the body. If it were truly pure and essential, then it should not admit the perfuming of habitual delusion.

Why then is it that, when in former years you once saw some strange thing, after the passing of time both the memory and the false thought seemed to have disappeared, yet later, if you suddenly see that former strange thing again, the memory at once returns entire, with nothing lost?

Then, within this clear, penetrating stillness that seems unmoving, thought after thought continues to receive impressions and perfuming. What reckoning can account for this?

Ānanda, you should know: this stillness is not the true. It is like a swift-flowing stream which, when looked at from afar, seems calm and quiet. Because the current is too rapid to be seen, it does not follow that there is no flow.

If it were not the source of thought, how could it receive the perfuming of false habits?

Unless your six faculties were opened and merged into mutual interchangeability, this false thought could never at

any time be extinguished.

Therefore, within your present seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing, the deeply ingrained habits that run on unbroken are, within that still and lucid interior, but shadowy, empty, and formless—the fifth inverted and extremely subtle essential false thought.

Ānanda, these five receiving skandhas are all constituted from the five false thoughts.

If you now wish to know the causes, the boundaries, and their relative shallowness or depth, then this is how it is:

Only form and emptiness mark the boundary of form.

Only contact and separation mark the boundary of feeling.

Only memory and false ideation mark the boundary of thought.

Only cessation and arising mark the boundary of formations.

Stillness entering into stillness, and returning into consciousness, marks the boundary of consciousness.

The source of these five skandhas arises in layered overlap. Their arising is due to consciousness; their cessation proceeds beginning from the removal of form.

In principle, awakening is sudden, and by means of awakening they are extinguished together. But in actual practice they are not removed all at once; according to the process, they are exhausted in sequence.

I have already shown you this by the example of the layered knots in the cloth. What is there that is still unclear, that you ask again in this way?

You should take this root-source of false thought, open it clearly in your own mind, and transmit it to cultivators in the Dharma-Declining age to come. Cause them to recognize what is false and illusory, to give rise to deep revulsion toward it from within themselves, to know that Nirvāṇa truly exists, and not to remain attached to the Triple Realm (of Desire, Form, Formlessness).

Ānanda, suppose again there were someone who filled all the empty space throughout the ten directions completely with the seven precious substances, and with them made offerings to Buddhas as numerous as motes of dust, attending upon them and making offerings, with never a thought of waste or emptiness in the heart.

What do you think? Would this person, through such causes and conditions of offering to the Buddhas, gain much merit or not?

Ānanda replied:

"Empty space is without end, and precious jewels are without bound. In former times there was a living being who offered the Buddha only seven coins, and yet, after giving up that body, still obtained the station of a Wheel-Turning King. How much more so now, when the empty space before us is already exhausted in thought, the Buddha-lands fill all places, and all are offered with precious jewels.

Even if one were to ponder it through kalpas to the limit, one still could not measure it. How could such merit possibly have any boundary?"

The Buddha said to Ānanda:

"The words of all Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, are never false.

Suppose again there were someone who had committed within his own body all four grave offenses and the ten pārājikas, and who in the space of a single instant were to pass through the Avīci Hells of this world and other worlds, and even through all the Unintermittent Hells throughout the ten directions, leaving none untraversed.

Yet if, with a single thought, he were able to take this Dharma-gate and, in the final age, reveal it to those who have not yet learned, then that person's karmic obstacles and sins would be extinguished in that very thought. The causes that would have brought about the sufferings of the hells would be transformed into a land of peace and bliss.

The merit he would gain would surpass that of the former person who made offerings by a hundredfold, a thousandfold, a thousand myriads of millions of times—indeed, to an extent that no calculation or analogy could ever reach."

Ānanda, if there are living beings who can recite this sūtra and uphold this mantra, then, as I have explained in full, even if one were to speak of their merit through kalpas without end, it could never be exhausted.

If they rely upon my words of instruction and cultivate the Way in accordance with the teaching, they will proceed straight to Bodhi and will never again be troubled by the works of demons.

When the Buddha had spoken this sūtra, the bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas, and upāsikās; all the gods, humans, and asuras of the world; and also the Bodhisattvas and followers of the Two Vehicles from other regions, the holy immortals, youthful ones, and the mighty ghosts and spirits who had newly brought forth the Bodhi-mind—all were greatly joyful. They bowed in homage and departed.